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CELTIC ESCHATOLOGY AND PARALLELS IN DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Early Celtic writers were greatly concerned with the Hereafter. Both they and Dante wrote on the question, not in the form of a system of speculation, but in that of a vividly-imaged narrative. "They sought to cover the dry bones of intellectual foundations with flesh and blood."[1] Just how much The Divine Comedy owes to the apocalyptic writings of the Celtic authors of the Middle Ages is hard to judge. Vossler poses one aspect of the problem of the present study when he says, "An adequate work on this subject still remains to be written."[2] There is a seeming lack of evidence to prove that Dante actually read works of Celtic Literature, specifically. He has left no direct mention of reading any, either in the Commedia, or in his other writings. There are numerous proofs, however, of an internal type of evidence to give weight to the probability that he was familiar with the same stream of culture that fed the most popular literature emanating from Ireland from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries.

This investigation proposes to show, through a dichotomy of parallels, that some Celtic literary movements of the Middle Ages and Dante's Divine Comedy emerge from similar

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1. Buxton, E.J.,"Prophets of Earth, Hell, and Heaven," in Contemporary Review, May, 1941.
2. Vossler, Karl, Mediaeval Culture. Vol.II, P.423. New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1929.

well-springs. They start on common ground since both are in the stream of great world literature, and both are concerned with topics of timeless significance: the nature of the unseen world, and whether the individual is responsible for his destiny there.

The suggestion that The Divine Comedy offered fertile ground for examination with Celtic literature came from Professor Sydney Gunn, who was Professor of English and Director of Research in Celtic, at Boston University, until his death in 1941. His course in Middle Irish in which O'Curry's and O'Donovan's books on source materials were the main texts,[1] intensified an already well-developed interest in early Celtic literature.

Meaningful parallels between The Divine Comedy and Celtic writings fall into four broad fields and are discussed under Celtic Voyage Literature, Celtic Vision Literature, St. Patrick's Purgatory, and the Spiritual Writings of early Celtic theologians. In Chapter II, Voyage literature, "imrama", is defined. Celtic voyage literature is made up of stories about persons who went out on quests, usually over the sea, and usually in search of knowledge concerning the Otherworld. The most important voyage tales[2] are the Voyage of Bran, the Voyage of Maildun, the Voyage of the Sons of Ui Corra, and the Voyage of St. Brendan. At the end of the section describing

1. O'Curry, Eugene, Lectures on Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History. Dublin, J.Duffy, 1861.
On Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish. London, Williams, Norgate, 1873.
O'Donovan, John (Ed.), Annals of the Four Masters. Dublin, Hodges & Smith, 1851.

2. The Voyage of Snegdus and MacRiga is a less well-known Imrama legend.

the voyages, a compendium of incidents common to all the tales is drawn up, and like situations occurring in The Divine Comedy are noted.

In Chapter III, vision literature, "fis", is defined. It consists of that group of legends narrating revelations about the Otherworld, made to individuals, and kept orally at first, then in ancient manuscripts, and finally appearing in translation throughout Europe.[1] The best-known vision legends are described in detail.[2] They are the Vision of Adamnan, the Vision of St. Laicren, the Vision of Tundal, and the Vision of Fursa. A summary of the chief characteristics of Celtic Visions is included in the chapter, and instances of similar incidents and situations in the Commedia are pointed out, first in a general paragraph and then with specific illustrations from the text.

St. Patrick's Purgatory is described in Chapter IV. Its history, location, and its reputation in the Middle Ages, are the subject of one of the sub-headings in the chapter. References to it in later literature are many, and for the purpose of emphasizing the wide appeal of the tale, some of them are noted. The main parallels between St. Patrick's Purgatory and The Divine Comedy are pointed out.

The spiritual writings of renowned Celtic authors are the subject of Chapter V. The first part is devoted to Joannes Scotus Erigena. A short biography and a paragraph on the

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1. Cf. P. 36, infra, and N. 1, loc. cit.
2. Visions referred to in this study are Fis, exclusively. A group of poems, known as Aisling, (meaning "vision", also) were important in the literature of Ireland in the eighteenth century. For Aisling, see an interesting work: Corkery, Daniel, The Hidden Ireland. Dublin, Gill, 1925, Pp. 126-145.

writings of Erigena are followed by notes on important points from his translation into Latin of the Celestial Hierarchy of the Pseudo-Dionysius, which so closely parallels the framework of Dante's spiritual cosmography in Paradiso. The second part of Chapter V is a description of the place occupied by Richard of St. Victor among the supernaturally-minded of the Middle Ages. There is a short biography of Richard, a listing of his major works, and a paragraph on the eminent monastery to which he was attached. A detailed description of Richard's two works on contemplation: Benjamin Major and De Contemplatione, is part of the chapter which continues with a statement of the most influential ideas of both writers. In the final section of Chapter V, the system of Dante's Paradiso, particularly, is examined, in view of parallels existing between his description of the soul's ascent to beatific bliss, and the way in which it was accomplished by the individual soul, in the light both of the Dionysian theory and the theological advice of Richard of St. Victor. A presentation of the conclusions arrived at by way of the investigation is contained in Chapter VI.

Some of the most profound scholars of the last century interested themselves in ancient Celtic literature. Included among them are Kuno Meyer, Thomas Wright, D'Arbois de Jubainville, Alfred Nutt, Whitley Stokes, and Heinrich Zimmer.[1] Their writings, in their respective areas, were referred to carefully. For a historical background of Irish history, Geoffrey Keating's History of Ireland[2] was used. Translations directly from

1. See Bibliography for works.
2. Keating, Geoffrey, General History of Ireland. Translated from the Original Irish by Dermod O'Connor, Antiquary of the Kingdom of Ireland. Dublin, 1723. (Standard history of Ireland)

Middle Irish, were used for the voyage and vision legends, and for St. Patrick's Purgatory. The Catholic Encyclopedia, works in Migne's collection,[1] together with source books and general histories of religion and philosophy were consulted for Erigena and Richard of St. Victor.[2] The Italian text of The Divine Comedy (Grandgent's) was used for quotations of parallels with Celtic literature.

Early in the nineteenth century scholars began to turn their attention to possible precursors of Dante. Important research was done by Cancelliori in 1814, then by Labitte and D'Ancona later in the century. Since 1900, outstanding scholars in the field have been Dods, Boswell, Gardner, and Seymour.[3] As Vossler says, an exhaustive, comprehensive, unified work on possible aspects of Celtic literature affecting Dante's poem has yet to be done.[4]

Cancelliori mentions the Vision of Tundal and St. Patrick's Purgatory, recalling a reference to the latter in Ariosto's Orlando Furioso.[5] Boswell sees a close resemblance

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1. See Bibliography for specific titles.
2. Ibid.
3. Cancelliori, Francisco, Osservazioni sopra l'Originalité ella Divina Commedia di Dante. Rome, 1814.
   Labitte, M.Charles, "Divine Comédie avant Dante". Oeuvres. des Dante Alighieri. Paris, Charpentier et Cie, 1872.
   D'Ancona, Alessandro, I Precursori di Dante. Firenze, 1874.
   Dods, Marcus, Forerunners of Dante. Edinburgh, T.Clark, 1903.
   Boswell, C.S., An Irish Precursor of Dante. London, Nutt,1908.
   Gardner, Edmund, Dante and the Mystics. London, Dent,1913.
   Seymour, St.John, Irish Visions of the Otherworld. New York, Macmillan, 1930.
4. Vossler, P. 1, infra.
5. Quoted on P. 67, infra.

to The Divine Comedy in the Vision of Adamnan. Labitte's essay considers St. Brendan's Voyage, the Vision of Tundal, and St. Patrick's Purgatory to be possible important sources of material to which Dante may have had access. D'Ancona makes a definite statement to the effect that Dante knew the three legends mentioned above. Gardner decides that the influence of Celtic literature on Dante was mostly in the spiritual realm. Dods reviews the work of previous scholars and concludes that Celtic writings, especially the Vision of Tundal and St. Patrick's Purgatory, were forerunners of Dante. Seymour describes vision material as it develops through the centuries.

The present study is occupied with the use of situation, ideas and matters of style in Celtic literature as paralleled in Dante, based on a personal examination of Celtic Otherworld legends and The Divine Comedy, rather than with influences and precursors. Vossler's work was particularly helpful in getting an over-all picture of the mediaeval acene reflected both in Celtic literature and in Dante.[1].

1. Vossler, op. cit.

CHAPTER II

CELTIC VOYAGE LITERATURE

The romantic literature of Ireland, known as the "prim-scéla", was divided into seventeen general classes, one of which, the Imrama, or voluntary voyage tales, appears to have much in common with Dante's Divine Comedy. Parallel situations between the legends and the Commedia are quoted in the last section of the present chapter, following relevant data, descriptions, and conclusions about four major voyage stories.

Labitte has said truthfully, "L'auteur de la Divine Comédie n'est pas pour rien le représentant poétique du moyen âge. Placé comme au carrefour de cette ère étrange toutes les routes mènent à lui."[1] The preceding statement sums up the viewpoint of the present investigator.[2] Labitte points out that many roads lead to the great Dante, and the subject of this chapter, the legends of Celtic voyages, seems to be one of them.

The legends were recounted to the people by the Filid, members of a literary profession provided for through public endowment. Standards were strict, set by a highly critical popular audience.[3] The poets of Ireland were an honored class and their lore was a sacred trust that provided the most-valued recreation of the nation. Thus the stories entered into the traditional life of the country, to form an impressive body

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1. Labitte, op. cit., P. 85.
2. Cf. Chapter VI, infra.
3. O'Curry, Lectures on Ancient Ms. Materials. Vol. II, P.48.

of popular literature.

The Imrama did not burst forth all at once any more than any of the other classes of Celtic literature in vogue during the Middle Ages. They were an outgrowth of the old hero stories, and although they added a Christian goal eventually, they retained their very early conception.

The geographical formation of Ireland had something to do, very likely, with the inborn love of adventuring over the sea that is observed in many Irish folk-tales.[1] The island was populated by means of mass invasions[2] and it must have been natural for the inhabitants to think in terms of lands beyond their own. A god of the sea, ManaananMacLir, was one of the important figures in Celtic pagan worship. There seems to have been a transference from actual roaming on the sea to imaginary feats abroad. From a mundane hinterland, the Celts branched off to a spiritual Otherworld. Punishments or woes were not an accompaniment of early Celtic stories about a Land after Death. They were concerned with the happy qualities of a region where man might find himself hereafter. In fact, one group of tales stressed the humorous features of the next world, exclusively.[3] To broaden their knowledge of the Happy Otherworld, the Celts set forth in coracles[4] at the invitation of attractive queens and the Filid perpetuated the adventures of these heroic quests.

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1. Modern Irish drama illustrates use of the sea as a theme: Synge, Riders to the Sea.
2. Keating, op. cit., Pp. 69-132.
3. Land of Cockaigne. Ex., Vision of Macgonlinne, P.11, infra.
4. Celtic boats were known as "coracles".

For example, tCuchulinn, the mightiest of all Celtic heroes and referred to sometimes as the Irish Achilles, had an experience in the Happy Otherworld, when he was invited there by Fann.[1] He came back to the world describing a "tree from whose branches came beautiful, harmonious music". When Cormac MacArt, High-King of Ireland in the third century, went to the Land of Promise, legend says, to get the wife and children he traded off, he reported seeing a "fruit-bearing, musical tree".[2] The Celtic Tir n'an Og (Land of the Young) is a version of the Happy Otherworld that mortals jouneyed to, either at the close of life or through the machinations of fairies. Oisin went to this Land of the Young and left a whole cycle of poems on the subject. The Irish Land of Women, also, was analogous to a halcyon land free of earthly trials. The pre-Christian Happy Otherworld thus parallels the Christian Paradise, the Heaven that St. Patrick promised those who were faithful to God's teachings. It is much like the Chaldean and Greek Elysium.[3] The Celtic voyage tales were journeys to find a "land of unending joy to which mortals may penetrate without dying".[4]

Visits to the Otherworld, then, were one of the most frequent subjects of Irish legend. Sometimes the Otherworld was the realm of the Dagda,[5] sometimes the island paradise of ManaananMacLir, the Sea-god. Usually the catalog of Otherworld features included the pleasures of the common people.

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1. Cross, T.P., Ancient Irish Tales, New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1936. "Sick-bed of Cuchulinn".
2. Macculloch, J.A. Mythology of All Races, Boston, Marshall, Jones, 1918. Vol. IIII, Ch. 9.
3. Cf. Ch. III, infra, Pp. 33, 34.
4. Nutt, Alfred, Happy Otherworld. Vol II, P. 239. London, Nutt, 1893. (Meyer, Nutt authorship)
5. Chief pagan god in early Celtic religion.

From an old romance comes the following account, "a wondrous land, traversed by warm, sweet streams; the people there are handsome, without blemish, conceived without sin, with bodies like snow, white of skin, black of brow, with hair like tufts of a primrose, cheeks like a fox-glove, eyes like blackbirds' eggs."[1] So Mider tells his beloved, Etain, to induce her to the Land of Promise. Other voyages illustrate the Celtic spirit of unawed camaraderie towards gods.[2] The Vision of Macgonlinne in the land of Cockaigne (World of Flesh) where low appetites, literally and figuratively, ruled, describes the adventures of the hero in something of a burlesque style. The legend is very funny, patently a parody of Imrama tales. Macgonlinne was summoned to the Otherworld by a phantom whose voice he hears in the midst of sleep. The spirit visitor sings to him of the delights he will find in the Land of Flesh.[3] They all relate to the sense of taste. A "food-pedigree" one of the characters in the story calls them. The narrator of the vision, Macgonlinne, is a clerical student[4] interested in poetry, something of the jongleur, goliardic type of character familiar in mediaeval literature. The fact that the voyage tales were parodied would indicate how popular they were.

Four voyages are considered in this chapter: the Voyage of Bran, the Voyage of Maildun, the Voyage of the

1. Leahy, Arthur, "Courtship of Etain", in Heroic Romances of Ireland. London, Nutt, 1905.
2. Simpson, J.H., Oisin, Bard of Erin, "Dialogue between St. Patrick and Oisin" London, Nutt, 1892.
3. Meyer, Kuno, Vision of Macgonlinne, London, Nutt, 1892. Translated by Meyer from the Speckled Book. Called a vision but has a voyage in it.
4. Macgonlinne is very different from Chaucer's clerical student.

Sons of Ui Corra, and the Voyage of St. Brendan. If Dante knew any of them, it was probably St. Brendan's Voyage, which is an evolution of the preceding ones. It is interesting to see how the tales grow more elaborate and more Christianized until they arrive at their highest point in the Navigatio Brendani.

The Voyage of Bran[1].

It is a seventh century legend.

General description:

Bran hears alluring music. It dulls his senses and when he comes to himself again, he has a trophy of his "dilatatio". Through the trophy, he meets a strange woman who provides him with more music, this time accompanied by many poetic verses of a song she sings to him. Her song is of a far-off island and she improvises fifty quatrains describing the diversions Bran will find there if he accepts her invitation. He does accept and after selecting a crew he embarks on his voyage. Boswell says of this voyage legend, "It contains the most detailed picture of the Happy Otherworld. The latter appears as a perpetuity of joy with linked melody."[2].

Details of the voyage:

> While he is alone, Bran hears sweet music, which puts him to sleep-When he awakes, he finds in his hand a branch: silver with white blossoms-He takes the branch to the Royal House-3.-He finds there a woman in strange raiment-She sing to Bran-Her song has fifty quatrains-The theme of the song is a distant isle around which sea horses glisten-4. She dwells on the physical delights Bran will enjoy if he goes there-Among them are

1. Tr., Kuno Meyer. (Co-author with Nutt, op. cit.)
2. Boswell, op. cit., Ch. III, P.124.
3. Irish House of Hospitality. Ex.,Bricru's Feast.
4. Horses are popular in Celtic literature. Ex.,Oisin, Gilla Dacker, Cuchulinn, Maildun.

Pillars of crystal supporting the island
An ancient tree on which birds call the canonical hours-1.
Splendor of color
Perpetual JOY-No wailing or treachery
Sweet music striking the ear everlastingly-No rough or harsh noises
No grief, sorrow, death, sickness, or debility
Abundance of wealth and treasures of every description and hue and with the added beauty of freshness-Included are gold, and silver, and bronze-2.-There are yellow houses, crimson ones, all blue ones-

After crossing a clear sea, Bran will come to an island, near which the woman cautions him to row slowly so that he will be enabled to hear harmonious strains of music coming from a hundred instruments-The people on the island play games all the day, and listen to music at night-Laughter is heard on every side-The woman makes a prophecy that a great birth is to come, not in a lofty place, to a woman whose mate will not be known-The new born will seize the rule of many thousands-Bran sets out with "thrice nine" voyagers-He meets Manaanan MacLir who sings thirty quatrains about the men and gentle women inhabiting a favored isle where there is no sin or crime, but only innocent joy-Manaanan advises Bran to go on to the island and tells him it is known as the Land of Women-Bran comes to an island where a hermit tends souls-He sails on and passes the isle of big blacksmiths-Next Bran feels a strand of thread across his face and finds that it is from a long piece afloat near his coracle-He takes hold of it and it sticks to his hand, pulling his boat to an island where the queen of the island holds a ball from which the thread is unrolling-Bran is attracted to her-She tells him she has borne to the king of the island seventeen daughters-She seems very young and desirable still-Wondrous pleasures await Bran in the Land of Women-Among them are

Food exactly to every one's taste
A palace of crystal and a bridge over it-3.
A beautiful maiden serving food and drink-4.
No giving or taking in marriage
Speaking birds
A crystal sea around the island-5.
A lovely country beneath the sea
Abundance of fruit and wine, producing a soothing effect that effaces one's past life
No old age or sickness
A mystic lake on the island
A wall of water guarding the island

---

1. Resemblance to the Chaldean Elysium. Ch. III, infra.P.33.
2. For a description of Irish workmanship with precious metals, see O'Kelly, J.J., Elements of Irish Art, Dublin, Gill, 1934.
3. Like the Eastern Land of Promise, Ch. III, infra, loc.cit.
4. The cure prescribed for Macgonlinne's anemia.
5. There are many references to "crystal" in the Book of Enoch. Ch. III, infra. P.33.

The queen does not want Bran to leave the Land of Women-One of his crew gets homesick, so he bids good bye to his hostess-She warns him that he will never set foot in Ireland-Just as he leaves his boat to step on his native land, he turns into ashes-1.

The Voyage of Bran builds up a cumulative atmosphere of joy, but without the licentious hedonism of classical pagan tales. Many of the desirable features of the Happy Otherworld described in the Voyage of Bran are derived from the historically important Tuatha da Danan, one of the four hosts of invaders who came to Ireland in ancient times.[2] Like most other Celtic literature the Imrama are highly symbolic. They sound exceedingly naive but, as Dante tells his readers concerning The Divine Comedy,[3] the reader is to supply more than one meaning. The Filid had to be most scrupulous to include all details of symbolic import. The tale in Irish literature most like the Voyage of Bran is Connla the Fair, often included with the story-group, Conn of the Hundred Battles.[4]

The Voyage of Maildun

The legend is recorded in the Book of the Dun Cow,[5] dated 1100. O'Curry thinks it is an eighth century legend

General description:

Maildun goes to sea for vengeance on his father's slayers. He encounters greater varieties of fantastic adventures, than does Bran. The tale has more energy than

1. Oisin, too, suffers death when he leaves the Plain of Delight.
2. The Tuatha da Danan came in 3303 B.C. according to the Annals of the Four Masters. Quoted by Keating, op.cit., P.86.
3. Cf. Ch. VI, infra, P. 117.
4. Nutt, op.cit,Vol.II,P.145, compares Connla with Bran.
5. O'Curry, op.cit., P. 289.

the Voyage of Bran and is more often included in old Celtic romances. Maildun finds a wonderfully fruited tree, as Bran did. The most unusual episode of his voyage, however, is the Miller of Hell incident in which Maildun meets the man from Hell who grinds whatever riches people are dissatisfied with. The item about the island with the Phoenix-like bird is interesting and unique. Maildun, also, is so dear to the amorous queen that she is loth to let him go, and it is only by cutting off his hand that Maildun frees himself from her.

Details of the voyage:

> Maildun was brought up by an Irish queen as her son-He excelled in many sports-1.-Jealous youths revealed to Maildun that he was actually not of noble birth, for the queen was really not his mother-Maildun asked the queen then who his father was-She told him it was the slain Aillil-Maildun departed to seek his father's slayers-His foster brothers accompanied him-On the voyage Maildun comes across many strange islands-Among them are
>
> An island of plunderers
> An island of ants "big as foals"
> An island of birds
> An island of monsters
> An island where a beautiful maiden extols chastity 2.
> An island where a demon horse race took place 3.
> An island where there is a palace of solitude and an abundance of food and drink
> An island of bloodthirsty horses that bite and tear each other
> An island presided over by an indescribably huge monster-He is shaped like a horse with a dog's paws
> An island of fiery animals-Maildun collects apples on the island, depite the animals
> An island presided over by a cat-Food and drink are found gratis on the island-One member of Maildun's crew steals an ornament, and is killed by the cat

1. Prowess in physical feats is given homage in Celtic tales. Ex., Boy Deeds of Cuchulinn. High Deeds of Finn.
2. Meyer says this is not exclusively a Christian note. Chastity was valued by pagan cults. Meyer-Nutt, op.cit., P.167.
3. Cf. P. 12, infra, n.4.

An island that dyes people who step on it black and white
A Miller of Hell who is noted for his size-He grinds whatever coins or riches people are dissatisfied with-
An island of weeping persons-They wander restlessly, wailing always
And island with four walls built of precious stones-They were Gold, Silver, Copper, Crystal-The wall has a bronze door that gives out sweet music
On this island each person finds food and drink exactly to his own particular taste-A lovely maiden serves Maildun-She trys to persuade him to stay forever-He remains there three months, but it seems like three years, so far away has he put thoughts of home-When he leaves, the lady thrusts an end of a thread into Maildun's hand, and another end she keeps-He has to cut off his hand to escape
An island of laughing persons
An island of the blest-It has a mystic lake on it- A follower of Brendan is there (Brendan-lir)
An island where a hermit presides, seated always on a rock
An island where a great ancient bird lives-While Maildun is there, other birds peck at the big bird, taking off his old feathers, and shining his new ones-They take him to a lake for a bath-The bird emerges a fledgling 1.
After all this long wandering, Maildun sees signs of home again-He sees his enemy, his father's slayer, but when he hears him say that he has prepared a kind reception for him, Maildun accepts his hospitality and renounces thoughts of revenge-Then he and his brothers go home-

In this legend, also, symbolism is important. For one thing, Maildun purged away his bitterness and went back home at peace with himself and his fellow creatures. As Dante says, the "bit" of envy (on the part of Maildun's jealous rivals in sports) which was the cause of all the restless voyaging, was overcome by the "whip" of charity. 2. The story is like the Voyage of Bran, in the island of the hermit, the island of the Earthly Paradise, the island of the laughing,

1. Meyer shows evidence that the Phoenix-like incident may be of Egyptian origin. He quotes the Phoenix poems of Caedmon, Cynewolf, and suggests that they may have had the idea from the Celts. Meyer, Nutt, op.cit., P. 169.
2. Divine Comedy, Purg., XIII, 37-40.

the island with the wonderful fruit tree, an island with a mystic lake. It has much more of the infernal in it in the incidents, for example, of the animals that bit and tore each other, the huge monster, the fiery animals, weeping people, the Miller of Hell. Some of the episodes remind the reader of the education of Gargantua and Pantagruel.[1] Boswell says of the Voyage of Maildun, "The legend goes from the 'humble heaven' provided by nature, to the more spiritual imagery of the 'ben dell'intelletto'."[2]

The Voyage of the Sons of Ui Corra

This is a legend of the eleventh century. It is from the Book of Lismore. O'Curry uses the manuscript for one of his lectures on the beverages of the ancient Celts.[3] He thinks it took place in the year 540 A.D. To prove that the Ui Corra actually went on a voyage, O'Curry relates the history of the Imrama story. One of the party told the story of the expedition to a certain Bishop Justin of Ireland, who gave the returned voyager's account to St. Colman of the Arran Islands by whom it was written down.[4]

General description:

Like Maildun, the voyage is undertaken for a purpose other than mere gratification of curiosity about the Otherworld. It shows progress toward a Christianized mode in Imrama literature. Ui Corra's sons go travelling as a penance.

1. Meyer, Nutt, "Rabelaisian element in the Happy Otherworld", op. cit.
2. Boswell, op. cit., P. 154.
3. Tennyson has an interesting poem on the legend. Cf.Biblio.vii.
3. O'Curry, On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish.
4. O'Curry, Lectures on Ancient Ms. Materials, P. 289.

Detailed description:

> Ui Corra was a wealthy landowner in Connaught-He and his wife were childless until they made a compact with the devil-They had three sons at one birth as a result of their pact-The devil extorted a promise from them that if they had thriving offspring, the children would have to do as he bade them-To this the Ui Corra agreed-[1]. From childhood the sons were noted for their wickedness-One of their evil deeds was to burn a church-The priests of the church lost their lives during the fire-Then one of the three had a vision in which he saw the glories of Heaven and the damnation of Hell-His vision was preceded by sweet music-In it he saw four streams of punishment [2]. supervised by a monstrous, many-headed worm-Terrible fires burned where the four streams merged-As a result of the vision the brothers repented of their evil ways-For a penance they went on a voyage-
>
> They find an island where all the food given them is just exactly what each prefers-They come to an island where people are torn by black birds with red hot claws-They come to an island where everyone moans perpetually-One of their party steps on it and immediately dies-A talking bird comes onto their ship-They come to isles in stormy seas where men are suffering for their wrong doings-A man who rides a flaming horse without ever resting tells them he has to do so because he has stolen his neighbor's horse-There is an island where clergymen read their offices and pray without stopping because they were neglectful of their holy duties while on earth-A peasant digs soil up with his hands with no intermission because he tilled the soil on Sundays when he was alive-

Sullivan, also, places the legend in the oral tradition of the sixth century. The tale, besides having the Christian accent on the penitential, includes very definite aspects of Hell. Moreover, people are being punished to suit their individual sins.

The Voyage of Brendan

The legend dates from 1100. It is from the Book of Lismore. It is referred to in Gaston de Metz's Image of the

1. Sullivan, T.D., Poems from the Gaelic. Dublin, Eason & Son, 1891.
2. Cf. Vision of Adamnan, Ch. III, infra.

World, 1246. It was known in England where an Anglo-Norman version of it, the work of a trouvère, was dedicated to Adelze, Queen of Henry I.[1] It was recounted by St. Malo, a pupil of St. Brendan. A manuscript in the Vatican Library is ascribed to the ninth century.

Biography of St. Brendan:

St. Brendan was the son of St. Ita.[2] He was born near Tralee in County Kerry, in 484, and died in 577. He founded the famed monasteries of Ardfert and Clonfert. (The saint died in the latter.) An angel promised him a glimpse of Paradise, when he appeared to the saint during sleep. Brendan told his community of monks about the apparition. They built three vessels holding twenty men each. They set sail and found beautiful strange islands. The voyage to the Land of Delight took seven years. St. Brendan is sometimes referred to as the Christian Ulysses.[3] The Navigatio Brendani captured the mediaeval zeal for charting new routes and its fame brought many pilgrims and students to Ardfert. Brendan travelled in Wales and Iona doing missionary work for three years after he returned from his voyage.

General description of the voyage:

Of the legend Vossler says, "For the first time, a special abode and condition of neutral angels, neither evil nor blest, are mentioned."[4] He adds, "Monks took delight, first

1. Furst, Clyde B., A Group of Old Authors, Philadelphia, A.W.Jacobs & Co., 1899. "Miraculous Voyage of St. Brendan."
2. The expression "son" refers to the fact that the illustrious St. Ita educated Brendan.
3. Wright, Thomas, "St. Brendan, Legend of the Sea," Vol. 14, Early English Poetry, London, Printed for the Percy Soc., by C. Richards, 1844.
4. Vossler, op. cit., Vol. II, P. 124.

of all in Ireland, in adventurous, fabulous, awesome tales of a visionary future.[1] "The legend is by far the most detailed Imrama story in Celtic Voyage Literature. While searching for the land promised him in his dream, St. Brendan saw many exotic islands with strange inhabitants. Some of them resemble those in tales previously described. An island peculiar to this voyage tale is that on which the whale incident took place. Brendan sees Judas on one of the islands he and his men come to. The saint is lenient with Judas. Labitte thinks this one of the most touching, imaginative notes in all the literature of the Middle Ages.[2] The Golden Jerusalem that Brendan finds is similar to Bran's Happy Otherworld in the lush quality of its setting and "furnishings". The tone of the voyage is thoroughly Christian, although many episodes found in preceding voyage tales are listed in it.

Detailed description:

> St. Brendan sailed westward-At first the sea was very rough so he prayed to the Blessed Virgin to save him and his companions from death by calming-He landed on an island of sea cats-He came to an island where there were demons as black as coal-On the next island a hermit was living-He warned St. Brendan of monsters on the island-Then Brendan arrived at the Earthly Paradise, an island full of flowers, where there was no tree that was not laden down with fruit-It was full of precious stones-3. There was a river of very clear water on the island-The sun always shone there-A young man all shining with radiance appeared to St. Brendan and his monks and told them they could not land on the island because it was reserved for God-He told them to return home-On reaching home, the travellers still had the fragrance of Paradise-Brendan fasted for forty days, and again set sail, this time in a great wooden vessel-He came to a rocky isle where a large hound met him and led him to a hall where a fine feast was laid with bread and fresh fish-4.-The

1. Vossler, ibid
2. Labitte, op. cit., P. 121.
3. A resemblance to the Divine Comedy, in the rampart around Purgatory, Purg. IX, 50.
4., A hound figures in the Cuchulinn stories.

next island Brendan came to was the Land of Sheep-The party stayed there until Easter Saturday-They came to an erupting island-The upheaval was really a whale-Then they came to an isle known as the strikingly marvellous "isle of birds"-

Their wings tinkle like bells-The birds talk with Brendan-They tell him he must voyage for seven years-While talking with them Brendan learns that they are the fallen angels-They chant Vespers before he leaves-Next St. Brendan comes to the island of Holy Monks-St. Ailbe is there, now an old man very emaciated-He washes their feet-1.-The monks spend all their time in prayer-Sustenance is provided by God-On Sundays they are given extra rations but on week days they have bread and water-They have been there for eighty years by St. Patrick's command-The weather on their island is always fair-The monks never have any sickness-St. Brendan and his men are shown the beautiful chapel the monks have-It has crystal walls and crystal altar vessels, all wondrously lighted-Angels in the form of fiery arrows come in the windows while St. Brendan is attending Mass there, and light the candles on the altar-The monks keep perfect silence, Brendan observes-2.-Brendan sails on and comes to a fish of enormous size, so large that he and his men disembark and spend Easter on its back-It is a whale-They say Mass on it-Two monsters like dragons (griffins) are nearby-One eats the other-Fishes flock around and St. Brendan preaches to them-Birds bring them nourishment in the form of grapes-They see a sea so clear that they can see the bottom-They come to an island with beautiful purple and white flowers-Then in front of them a column rises out of the sea-It is covered with a rose canopy-The column itself is silver and is hard as marble-The saint finds a chalice of the same material-He comes to an island full of forges-A savage blacksmith is in charge of it-3.-They come to an island covered with cliffs-4.-It seems to be on fire-A strong evil stench comes from it-Brendan identifies it as the mouth of Hell-They find a man sitting on one of the rocks-He tells them, "I am unhappy Judas."-5.-There is a cloth over his face-The wind makes it strike him continually-He discloses that the only surcease he has is on Sundays and Holydays-Every other day he burns on a mass of molten lead, in spite of the frozen waves around him-The cloth that keeps hitting him is a cloak he had given a leper-It didn't belong to Judas in the first place, so he is suffering for bestowing ill-gotten goods-However, the "germ of kindness" is what procures him the slight relief he gets-A devil comes for him while St. Brendan is on the island-St. Brendan saves him from the demon for a night-The fiend assails the

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1. A custom in Irish Houses of Hospitality.
2. Here Brendan may have been exercising his role of abbot, hence the discipline of the monks impressed him.
3. A reference to a similar incident in the Visioni Tundali is on P.45, and in the Voyage of Bran, P.13, infra.
4. A reference to this island is sometimes given by those who see in it a likeness to the cliffs around Malbolge, Inf. XVIII, 1-3, 16-18.
5. Matthew Arnold emphasizes this incident in his poem, St. Brandan.

saisaint with hooks, roaming and crying, but he has to fall back before Brendan's holy presence-Judas tells St. Brendan that he bought two ox tongues with his own money, instead of with funds from the Lord's purse, and gave them to priests that they might pray for him-The ox tongues are now the cushions on his rock-The rock itself is one he had placed on a highway while he was alive, so people might rest on it-

Next St. Brendan comes to the isle of the Holy Hermit, Paul-He has been there for ninety years, living on water except on Sundays-At last the saint comes again to the Land of Promise-The same young man appears once more, and tells him he must wait until Judgment Day to inhabit the island because it is the private property of God until then-He leads Brendan to the top of a mountain shd shows him indescribably beautiful scenes-There are rivers of milk on the island, and dew that is like honey-1.-He lets St. Brendan take trophies of Paradise and the saint fills his boat with fruits and precious stones, then goes back to Ireland to await death prayerfully-2.-

There is no actual proof that St. Brendan took the celebrated journey. However, mediaeval geographers went so far as to locate the Promised Land on their maps.[2] It was put in various places: near the Canary Islands, and on what is now Madeira Island, and near Ireland. A whole cult subscribed to the belief that St. Brendan found America and that he landed in Florida.[3]

The legend of St. Brendan's Voyage must have had wide appeal in the Middle Ages. It is charming to read even now. There are vestiges of classical literature in it as well as traces of the influence of the previous Celtic Otherworld legends. Nutt says, "Of all classes of ancient Celtic mythico-fiction, this is the most famous and the one which has most directly affected the remainder of West European Literature."[4]

1. This part of the tale sounds Biblical.
2. D'Ancona, op. cit., P. 49, "L'isola di s.Brendano, sulla sola asserzione di questa scrittura, venne segnata sulle carte, e menzionata nei libri geografici del tempo."
3. Northmen coming to Vinland said that a land away to the south was known as "Greater Ireland". Indians in Florida said there had been white men there with iron implements.
4. Meyer, Nutt, op. cit., P. 169.

"The Voyage of St. Brendan was but the latest of a genre of story-telling which had flourished in Ireland for centuries," Nutt goes on to say.[1] The forgers on the island of the savage blacksmith remind one of Homer's Vulcan. Labitte thinks the upset sea and tempestuous waves were enraged devils. "Ce sont sans doute les damnés qui servent de fer malléable. Un de ces monstreux ouvriers vint pour frapper Brendan avec son marteau enflammé; et comme chacun de ces affreux forgerons jeta sa massue de feu à la mer, l'eau bouillonna comme en une chaudière échauffée."[2] O'Donoghue adds more about Satan in his translation of the story.[3] In his version, Satan appears to St. Brendan, on the sail of his boat, just after the saint had set forth from Ireland the first time. He said he sought Hell in the gloomy recesses of the sea and revealed to Brendan the gate of Hell. St. Brendan recorded the torments and horrors the party saw. One of the monks with him looked down and died from the effects of the horrors, but was later restored to life. Labitte gives St. Brendan credit for influencing Columbus[4] and Dante. He says, "Il est légitime de penser qu'elle n'a pas été sans quelque lointaine et sourde influence sur les deux fugitifs qui rêvent la contrée idéale, l'un l'inconnu des mers, l'autre de la vie future."[5] He pays tribute to Dante's wide knowledge when he writes of him, "Le poète, qui avait

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1. Meyer, Nutt, ibid.
2. Labitte, op. cit. P. 120.
3. O'Donoghue, Denis, "St. Brendan, the Voyager", Brendeniana, Dublin, Brown & N., 1893.
4. St. Colombo, Columbus's patron saint, founded the University of Bobio, Italy. He was a native of Ireland and became a learned monk attached to a monastery there before going to Italy. Zimmer, Heinrich, Irish Element in Mediaeval Culture, P. 42, New York, Putnam, 1891.
5. Labitte, op. cit., P. 122.

tout ce qu'on savait de son temps, a dû connaître 'le voyage de saint Brendan'."[1] The Celtic Imrama, particularly in their last stage, that is in St. Brendan's Voyage, were a typical instance of the mediaeval burning desire to uncover new territories for the Lord. Taylor says, "The noblest passion of the Irish monastic Christianity was to 'peregrinare' for the sake of Christ."[2] Renan emphasizes the symbolic quality of St. Brendan's Voyage when he says of the journey, "St. Brendan desiring the infinite, thirsting for it, pursuing it at all costs, beyond the tomb, beyond Hell itself" is an instance of the "instinct of the Celtic people to penetrate the unknown", seeking the Promised Land.[3] D'Ancona describes how widely known the legend was when he says, "Questa leggenda si diffuse per ogni parte d'Europa."[4]

General Characteristics of Celtic Voyage Tales:

Descriptions of the Happy Otherworld are remarkable for their poetry, beauty, and the gusto with which they are told. They radiate a confident attitude toward life here and in the world to come. Pessimism, or woeful melancholy, is the trait most distant from the tales, yet they do not have a strained optimism concerning the future. Rather, life on this earth is lived pleasantly and intensively, and the literature of the Otherworld but reflects the best aspects of this. Invitations

1. Labitte, ibid.
2. Taylor, Henry O., Mediaeval Mind. London, Macmillan, 1911, P. 173.
3. Renan, Ernest, "Poetry of the Celtic Races", Literary and Philosophical Essays. New York, Collier, 1910. "Harvard Classics")
4. D'Ancona, op. cit., P. 50. Evidently St. Brendan is in the hearts of Irish poets at the present time. A poem about him has just been published. It is Francis MacManus's Pattern of St. Brendan .

to Paradise often come from an amorous queen. The Plain of Delight is a land over water, usually in the form of an island. Remarkable fruit trees are on it. Food there has whatever particular taste each one desires. Columns making sweet music are frequently mentioned. A bountiful abundance of fruits and vintages are noted. Sweet-smelling, bright-hued flowers are a part of the Otherworld. The absence of earthly imperfections, the charms of music, a galaxy of rich colors, the intense light of Heaven, the stress on charity, mercy, and virginity are especially remarked in the legends. The Nirvana produced by the Otherworld is another quality often found in the stories. In Bran and Maildun, it is connected with the attractive queen as well as with the fine viands served. Celtic literature is seldom didactic, but undoubtedly the legends were meant to be allegorical and symbolic.[1] Renan remarks that the works are "pure, benevolent, gentle, innocent", that "the world was seen through the crystal of a stainless conscience."[2]

General Parallels between Imrama and the Commedia:

In the first place, heroes of Celtic voyage legends and Dante were seeking the Otherworld. Both they and he found there certain aspects of a punitive nature, suited to the sins of individuals. Among Imrama, this was particularly true in the Sons of Ui Corra. Brilliance, joy, and verdure are noted by both the Celts and Dante in the Land after Death. The

1. Cf. Ch. VI, infra.
2. Renan, loc. cit. The Tristram story produces the same effect, as do many plays by modern Irish playwrights. Ex., Carroll's Shadow and Substance.

The triumph of charity over baser attitudes is an interesting similarity observed in Maildun. The encircling wall of precious stones around the Earthly Paradise in several of the stories brings to mind the rampart around Purgatorio, made of the three contrastingly-colored steps. Another likeness between Celtic literature and the Divine Comedy, along the line of formation, also, is the island conspicuous for its cliffs that recalls the cliff barriers in Inferno. Perhaps the most important general parallel to be stressed in both Celtic works and in Dante is the ever-present symbolism noted throughout. It is discussed more fully under Conclusions, in Chapter VI. A group of specific parallels from the legends discussed in the present chapter and from the text of the Divine Comedy follow.

Specific Parallels between Celtic Imrama and Dante's Commedia

Power of music
Cf. Bran
Maildun

......"Se nuova legge non ti toglie
memoria or uso all'amorose canto
che me solea quetar tutte mie voglie,

di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto
l'anima mia,
Purg. II, 106-110.

Invitation by a woman

e donna mi chiamò beata e bella,
tal che di comandare io la richiesi.
Inf. II, 53, 54. 1.

e sarai meco, senza fine, cive
di quella Roma onde Cristo è Romano.
Purg. XXXII, 101,102. 2.

venna una donna, e disse: 'Io son Lucia;
lasciatemi pigliar costui che dorme,
Purg. IX, 55, 56. 3.

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1. Beatrice to Virgil
2. Beatrice to Dante
3. Lucia to Dante

indi mi tolse.....
.....
Menrenti agli occhi suoi.....
Purg. XXXI, 103; 109. 1.

Delights of the Earthly Paradise
JOY of Heaven, Calmness
Cf. Bran Maildun Brendan
.....m'andava tra tante primizie
dell'eterno piacer,
Purg. XXIX, 31, 32.

Blessings of Heaven
Mathilda sings to Dante of the joys of Heaven as the queen sang to Bran.
Purg. XXVIII, 76-144.

Innocence in Heaven
Qui fu innocente l'umana radice;
Purg. XXVIII, 142.

Laughter in Heaven
.....e forse perch'io rido,
.....in questo loco eletto
all'umana natura per suo nido,
Purg. XXVIII, 76-78.

Sacred tree in Heaven
Cf. Bran Maildun
Ma tosto ruppe le dolci ragioni
un arbor che trovammo in mezza strada,
con pomi ad odorar soave e buoni.
Purg.XXII, 130-132.

Clear water in Paradise
Cf. Bran Brendan
cadea dell'alta roccia un liquor chiaro,
Purg. XXII, 137.

Tutte l'acque che son di qua più monde
parrieno avere in sé mistura alcuna,
verso di quella che nulla nasconde;
Purg. XXVIII, 28-30.

Fertility of Paradise
Cf. Bran Maildun Brendan
Vedi là il sol che in fronte ti riluce;
vedi l'erbetta, i fiori e gli arbuscelli,
che qui la terra sol da sé produce.
Purg. XXVII, 133-135.

Flowers in Paradise
Cf. Brendan
....per mirare
la gran variazion dei freschi mai;
Purg. XXVIII, 35,36.

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1. Mathilda to Dante.

Abundance of fruit, vintage in Heaven
Cf. Brendan

E saper dei che la campagna santa,
ove tu sei, d'ogni semenza è piena
e frutto ha in sé che di là non si schianta.
Purg. XXVIII, 118-120.

Taste in the Earthly Paradise to suit everyone's taste [1]
Cf. Bran
Brendan
Ui Corra

A tutt' altri sapori esto è di sopra;
Purg. XXVIII, 133.

Brightness of Paradise
Cf. Brendan

ed ecco un lustro subito trascorse
da tutte parti per la gran foresta,
tal che di balenar mi mise in forse.
Purg. XXIX, 16-18.

Fragrance of Paradise
Cf. Bran
Brendan

su per lo suol che d'ogni parte oliva.
Purg. XXVIII, 6.

Precious stones in Paradise
Cf. Brendan

Poscia che i cari e lucidi lapilli,
ond'io vidi ingemmato il sesto lume,
Par. XX, 16,17.

Games in Heaven
Cf. Bran

cambiò onesto riso e dolce gioco.
Purg. XXVIII, 96.

Angels like flaming lights [2]
Cf. Brendan

e vidi le fiammelle andar davante,
lasciando retro a sé l'aer dipinto,
e di tratti pennelli avean sembiante;
Purg. XXIX, 73-75.

Bird becoming rejuvenated [3]
Cf. Maildun

poi cerchiaro una pianta dispogliata
di fiori e d'altra fronda in ciascun ramo.
.....
men che di rose e più che di viole
colore aprendo, s'innovò la pianta,
che prima avea le ramora sì sole.
Purg. XXXII, 38,39;58-60.

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1. Cf. Ch. VI, P. 117, infra.
2. Like the angels in the form of flames that Brendan saw enter the chapel window to illuminate the Sacrifice of the Mass on the island of Holy Monks.
3. Phoenix-like incident in Maildun resembles the tree in Dante.

Music in Heaven
Cf. Bran
Maildun
Brendan

Ed una melodia dolce correva
per l'aer luminoso;
Purg. XXIX, 22,23.

Wonderful apple tree in Paradise
Cf. Bran
Maildun
Brendan

.....dei fioretti del melo,
che del suo pomo gli angeli fa ghiotti,
e perpetue nozze fa nel cielo,
Purg. XXXII, 73-75.

Fair weather in Paradise
Cf. Bran
Brendan

qui primavera é sempre, ed ogni frutto;
Purg. XXVIII, 143.

Wine to everyone's taste
Cf. Bran
Ui Corra
Brendan

nèttare é questo di che ciascun dice."
Purg. XXVIII, 144.

Hermit in the Promised Land tending souls
Cf. Brendan
Bran

Poi vidi quattro in umile paruta,
e di retro da tutti un veglio solo
venir, dormendo, con la faccia arguta.
Purg. XXIX, 142-144.

Woman desirous of detaining those who attract her
Cf. Bran
Maildun

.....e qual meco si ausa
rado sen parte, si tutto l'appago.
Purg. XIX, 23,24.

Mortal allowed to carry back knowledge of Heaven
Cf. Brendan

Voglio anco, e se non scritto, almen dipinto,
dipinto,
Che 'l tte ne porti dentro a te, per
quello
Che si reca il bordon di palma cinto.
Purg. XXXIII, 76-78.

CHAPTER III

CELTIC VISION LITERATURE

Another widely known group of legends, narrated by the Filid are the Vision tales or "Fis". They have to do with the Otherworld in that they purported to be dream-excursions into the life beyond, experienced by privileged individuals. The romantic literature of the country was at its height about the time of the greatest activity of the Irish Church, but contrary to the attitude expressed by clerics in every other land in Europe, Irish prelates and priests tolerated literature from the pagan era, and even enlisted old associations into the service of the new faith. Thus the saying, "In Ireland it is the saint who protects the bard." There are instances in Ossianic literature of St. Patrick jovially discussing doctrinal problems of the Church with Oisin,[1] and in one instance, asking him and other Irish heroes about phases of Irish history.[2] In pre-Christian Celtic legends, references are, for the most part, to Heaven, or the rewards of the soul after death, although Oisin mentions that he had a glimpse of Hell.[3]

Research into origins of Celtic Vision Literature is described in the fore-part of this chapter. Then a considera-

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1. Simpson, ibid.
2. Nutt, Alfred, "Colloquy of the Elders", Ossian and the Ossianic Literature. London, D. Nutt, 1899.
3. Simpson, ibid. "If all the sea were ink, and all the feathers of the birds of the air were pens, and all the green earth paper, and all the sons and daughters of Eve were writers, it would be impossible for them to describe a tenth part of the horrors of Hell." P. 197.

tion of the four visions left by Adamnan, Laicrem, Tundal, and Fursa is given in detail. The history of the visions and biographies, where obtainable, of the individuals experiencing them are included, together with any further material that it was felt might widen the background of the specific vision. A list of characteristics of Celtic Vision Literature is presented, and, following that, a paragraph on general parallels, then the chapter is concluded with a group of specific parallells between Fis and Dante's poem.

There are many surmises about the origin of Celtic Vision legends. Scholars in the field have gone back to earliest civilizations in their search for the beginnings of Celtic eschatological literature. Some of their findings are worth looking at, briefly. They seem to show that Celtic literature concerning the Otherworld is part of a world stream of culture. The following paragraphs attempt to bear out this observation.

Boswell believes that the Celtic or Gallic Church, as he terms it was most influenced by Egyptian and Oriental phases of Otherworld literature. There were Irish pilgrimages to Egypt until the end of the eighth century. A Celtic Saltair has a version of the Book of Adam and Eve, that was first written in Egypt in the fifth or sixth century and of which there is no mention outside Ireland. The Egyptians believed in judgment of souls after death. Evil souls were devoured by an Eater of the Dead, much like Acheron in the Vision of Tundal. The righteous were led through a series of perilous adventures to a region of perpetual happiness.

The Chaldean Elysium is described as a mountain lying beneath a sky of silver, bearing crops without need of tillage. Souls of heroes and great men dwell there forever, reclining on couches, drinking the water of life. The Zoroastrean belief was that for three nights the soul sat by the body. If a righteous soul, it experienced a consciousness of great delight, including such sensuous pleasures as a sweet-scented wind, fragrant trees, and verdure all around. The evil soul was miserable for three nights and a foul wind blew on it. After three nights had passed the soul crossed a narrow bridge where good and evil struggled for supremacy. At the entrance to the bridge the soul was met by a lovely maiden who was its conscience. She took the soul to the judgment seat where a book of his deeds was shown him. If the balance was good, he was admitted to the presence of celestial powers, and given a golden seat. A sacred bird was there, the Karshipta[1] of Persian literature. Life was mirthful, glad, and all was harmonious and proportioned.[2] None had decayed teeth or were leprous!

Several of the incidents noted in ancient Eastern literature of the Otherworld are found in Celtic Vision Literature. The bridge, the struggle between good and evil, the bird, the happiness of Heaven, and the unblemished state of the inhabitants are among the most noteworthy. Oriental Otherworld references exclude Hell.

In Hebrew literature of the next world, the Book of Enoch has the most detailed description of a vision that

1. The Persian Karshipta breaks branches from the Tree of Life in much the same way that Dante's eagle breaks in on the car of the Church. Purg., 112-115, XXXII.
2. A resemblance to Celtic stress on physical perfection.

was vouchsafed to a mortal. The archangel Michael brings a guide to Enoch to lead him to the Otherworld. There Enoch sees infernal regions swept by whirlwinds and traversed by rivers of fire where carnal lusts are burned away. Enoch observes deadly enemies who gnaw one another.[1] Heaven, Enoch finds, is a city of crystal, surrounded by flame as hot as fire, and as cold as ice.[2] At the highest point of Heaven was One on a throne, clad in a robe brighter than the sun, whiter than the snow. A Tree of Life to nourish the righteous was growing in Heaven. The vision related in the Book of Enoch approaches the Celtic visions of the Christian era. It has Heaven and Hell. The heavenly guide, the punitive rivers, the deadly enemies tormenting one another, the description of Heaven and the Tree of Life are found in the visions described among Celtic Fis in the present chapter.

Classical vision literature of antiquity is referred to as another possible source of Celtic vision legends. Both the Iliad and the Odyssey have similar references to a world hereafter.[3] In the Phaedrus of Plato, Socrates gives a description of the abode of the righteous as a country of flowery meadows, full light, pleasant air, and theaters![4] In the Vision of Er, also, Plato has a vivid account of a life after death. Er is conducted on his Otherworld journey by a slave girl whom he knows. She bids him to return to his body after

1. A resemblance to Ugolino and Ruggieri in the Inferno, Inf. XXXII, 127-129.
2. Adamnan, Vision of Adamnan, relates seeing veils of flame and ice surrounding Heaven. They made a huge din.
3. Iliad, VIII. Odyssey, XI.
4. Socrates describes the physical perfection of persons in the Otherworld. He enumerates the precious stones there, too.

viewing the delights of Heaven, as the angel directs Adamnan to do. (Vision of Adamnan, seq.) Aristophanes includes a journey to Hades for Dionysius, in The Frogs. Dionysius finds there those who had violated laws of hospitality and who had hurt their parents. They had to wallow in a morass of mud, and were subjected to a series of harsh sounds. Celtic visions, also, stress disagreeable noises in Hell. Sophocles brings in the theme of life after death in Antigone, especially. She is compelled to release her brother from the torment of ceaseless wandering after death. Plutarch's Vision of Thespesius is among the visions described as a forerunner of important vision literature in the Christian era.[1] It, like the Vision of Er, and like all Celtic legends, treats of the judgment of a soul on its merits or demerits during life. The Aeneid is a blend of all the Otherworld ideas that preceded it.

Zimmer believes that Irish civilization was essentially Greek.[2] Greek merchants took refuge there, and there was an interchange of cultures.[3] Irish universities were cradles of Greek learning. The Irish Church leaned to the Eastern rite, and had to be firmly bent to Roman rule by Gregory the Great.[4] The contention that Celtic visions are influenced by Eastern and Greek eschatology, particularly, seems well-founded. Dante's erudition was from the Greek stream of culture, likewise, so a parallel in origins of source materials exists here.

1. Becker tninks that Thespesius was one of the more important sources of the Divine Comedy. He couples it in importance, with Alberic. (See Bibliography) Becker, Ernest, A Contribution to the Comparative Study of Mediaeval Visions of Heaven, Hell, with Special Reference to Middle English Versions. Baltimore, John Murphy Co., 1899.
2. Zimmer, ibid
3. McCallum, H. and J. Poems of Ossian, "A Grecian Princess Comes to Erin". Montrose, The editors, 1816. (sic)
4. Hence the rift with the Saxons who were staunchly Roman.

As pointed out in Chapter II and earlier in this chapter, Celtic hero stories make frequent mention of belief in life after death. From the tales of Cuchulinn, Finn, Oisin, Cormac MacArt, Maildun, and Bran, the literature progressed to the visions of such saints as Adamnan, Fursa, Laicren, to St. Brendan, and St. Patrick's Purgatory, and finally pervaded western Europe, and may have passed into Italy.[1] At any rate, it is interesting to point out parallels between the Celtic vision material in its mature form and Dante's incomparable poem.

Fis Adamnan

History of the vision:

The Fis Adamnan is found in the Book of the Dun Cow and in the Speckled Book. It dates from the eighth century. O'Curry comments on it, and it is mentioned in the Annals of the Four Masters.

Biography of Adamnan:

St. Adamnan, Abbot of Iona, lived in Ireland in the eighth century. He was of high birth. He went to Northumbria in Britain to see Aldfrid (who was educated at Malmsbury by Irish monks) and met the Venerable Bede.[2] Adamnan was a "high scholar of the western world", as can be seen by his writings. His life of St. Columcille written in good Latin is still a standard biography of the great missionary. He wrote a treatise on the holy places of Palestine, De Locis Sanctis that was praised by Bede. Adamnan gave an autographed

1. The Vision of Tundal was translated into Latin, then High German. St. Brendan's Voyage was translated into Anglo-Norman. St. Patrick's Purgatory appeared in Brunetto Latini's Tesoro.
2. Adamnan visited Bede to talk over changing the date of Easter in the Irish Church to conform with the English date settled by the Synod of Whitby, 664.

copy to King Aldfrid of Northumbria. He was interested in politics and by his efforts the six-century-old Boruimhuin tribute was reduced.[1] Adamnan's mother was Ronat, whom the saint made famous by emancipating the women of Ireland in her name. His law making it illegal for women to be killed or made captive during war was adopted by the Synod of Tara, in 697. (Adamnan was born in 624, in Donegal, and lived until 704.) The Four Masters described him as "tearful, penitent, given to prayer, diligent, and of an ascetic temperament". He ate only on Sundays and Thursdays. He was proficient in learning and virtue and was strenuously active.[2]

General description of Fis Adamnan:

The Vision of Adamnan was the first serious attempt between the Vision of Enoch and the Commedia to treat thoroughly and exclusively of the hereafter in a literary manner. Adamnan makes the Deity the center of the whole scheme of Heaven, as Dante uses the Celestial Rose idea in Paradiso.[3] The Throne of God is in the south-east in reference to the location of Jerusalem, where Dante also places it. Adamnan says he saw Heaven and Hell and there is a part of his vision that is much like the idea of Purgatory. There are nine degrees of Heaven as in Dante and a seven-fold wall surrounds it. The Divine Omnipresence absorbs Adamnan in true neo-Platonic style, and he describes Heaven emphatically as a realm for the sole purpose of contemplating God.

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1. A tribute levied on the kings of Leinster in the second century after one of their kings had dishonored the daughters of King Tuathal of Connaught. Keating, op.cit. P. 237
2. Life of Adamnan: Boswell, op.cit., Catholic Encyclopedia. The latter quotes Colgan and the Bollandists.
3. T. S. Eliot uses a similar figure of a golden rose in Four Quartets.

The Majestic Countenance is seven times as radiant as the sun and is gazing out from a fiery mass. This suggests Canto XXXIII of Dante's Paradiso. The Throne is supported by four pedestals of precious stones from which sweet music is heard. Evidently the sounding stones hark back to the famous Lia Fail that proclaimed the authenticity of the Irish kings' claims to their thrones, and that was later taken to Westminster where it was used for the same purpose.[1] A resounding door in Dante's Purgatorio[2] makes use of the same idea. Bird music is part of the heavenly harmony. A veil of fire and a veil of ice separate Heaven from the blessed who reside therein and from the unclean spirits who wander restlessly, tormented with a ceaseless longing to see God. Part of the anguish of the condemned comes from the din of the colliding veil obstacles. Souls of the righteous are bathed in a flowery spring for solace after they have been observing the pains of Hell.[3] Adamnan dwells upon how restless the souls in Hell were, that they suffered most from the mental torture of relinquishing all hope of Heaven. Their malady was a pronounced "maggior dolore" of the type described by Dante in Canto V, 121, of Inferno.

Details of the Vision of Adamnan:

> On the feast of St. John the Baptist, Adamnan's soul is taken from his body, and conveyed to the Otherworld by his guardian angel. The Land of Saints is fruitful, shining. Adamnan sees a company clad in cloaks of white linen, with white hoods on their heads. There is a crystal veil between the saints and God-In the southeast is a golden portico, beyond which reigns the Heavenly Presence-This region is surrounded by a circle of fire-Those in the

1. Keating, op. cit., Pp. 50,51,87,88.
2. Purg.IX, 135.
3. In Fis, as in Dante (Purg.XIX, 84), it was possible for the spirits of the guiltless to go through punishments unharmed.

Land of Saints stayed there until Doomsday and after that they were to listen while a heavenly judge talked to them about their eternal resting places in Heaven-Twelve Apostles and the Virgin formed an assembly around God-Near the Apostles were patriarchs, prophets, and others among Christ's disciples-The Holy Virgins were on Mary's right-All around were infants, children, birds of the heavenly family, making music-The Throne of God was like a canopied chair-Over it was an arch like an adorned helmet on a king's diadem-1.-On the arch were three birds who celebrated the Canonical Hours.2.-The Throne was supported by four columns of precious stones, from which came the most melodious harmony imaginable-God Himself assumed no human form, but was entirely a fiery mass-The City of God, wherein the Throne was set, was surrounded by seven crystal walls, each higher than the preceding-The floor was of white crystal, which turned into blue, purple, green, and every other brilliant color of the spectrum-The people of the city were a family very beautiful, very meek, very gentle, and arranged in circles around the Throne, always facing toward God.Between each two choirs of angels was a chancel rail of crystal, adorned with gold, silver, and every sort of gem-Between every two choirs were three precious stones with melodious voices-(Lia Fail suggestion)-3.-Seven thousand angels in the form of candles illuminated the City of God-Souls that could not be admitted to Heaven wandered with their guardian angels-4.-Veils of ice and fire shut them out of Heaven-At the gate of each of the seven gradations of Heaven was a celestial being who served as a warder-For example,Michael was stationed at Gate I and Uriel was at Gate II-(Michael left his post, according to Adamnan,and ushered souls to God, later on-)Before the door of the first heaven was a spring-It served to cleanse the just, and increased the pain of sinners-Obstacles before the heavens grew more severe as the sinners arose toward God-For example, a fiery furnace was before the first circle of Heaven, and a whirlpool before the next-Michael conducted souls to the Sixth Heaven-There they were illuminated by the brilliance of precious stones-Michael and the angel of the Trinity ushered the soul to God-If righteous, it was given a welcome-If not, God bade the angels deliver it to Lucifer-

Hell, Adamnan sees, is a glen filled with fire on the further side-A bridge goes across it-The chaste and penitent can cross the bridge easily-It is broad at first, and then grows narrow for unbelievers-Sinners crossing the

1. This is a good example of the Celtic use of simile. It is seen to perfection in the poems of Oisin. In one, the Death of Aldo, Oisin says of Aldo's widow, "Joy rises in her face, but sorrow returns again, like a thin cloud on the moon."
2. Cf. the Voyage of Bran, P. 13, infra.
3. Cf. preceding page.
4. A resemblance to Purgatory in Dante's poem, where the excommunicate wander-but without guardian angels.Purg.III,IV.

bridge wear icy cowls, making the trip even harder-Cold winds blew on the souls in Hell-Fiery rain tormented them-They suffered distress and mental restlessness-There were four rivers in Hell in which souls were punished-1.There was a whirlpool in Hell in which souls were immersed by the end of an angel's rod that was "hard as if of stone"-Adamnan is borne back through the crystal veil to the Land of Saints-He desires to remain there, but the angels bid him return to his body and preach to men-

Seymour says of this Fis legend, "Like Dante, Adamnan used pre-existing material, but in his use of it, he purified it from all grossness, purging away the dross and preserving the precious metal."[2] The vision has in it remnants of Imrama literature. The three birds on God's Throne are like those in the Voyage of Bran. The Throne, and the island Bran visits, are alike in the beautifully colored stones, and the four musical columns. The land of saints surrounded by a wall of fire is much like the Voyage of Maildun. There is a moat of fire in that spirited story from the great Ultonian cycle: The Tain Bo Chuailgné.

The Vision of Laicren

Kuno Meyer is the only scholar who has done outstanding research on this vision. Seymour uses his translation.
History of the vision:

The date given for Laicren (known also as Laisren, and, according to Seymour, Leighlin the Abbot) is 638.
General description of the vision:

The Fis Laicren treats of Hell almost entirely. Though brief and shadowy in its history, it is clear in its revelations. The particular feature of the Vision of Laicren is the

1. Cf. the Voyage of the Ui Corra, P. 18, infra. Socrates, in the Phaedrus of Plato, also describes four Otherworld rivers.
2. Seymour, op. cit., P. 118.

specific inclusion of Purgatory. In this part, also, it closely resembles the Limbo of Dante's poem, for Laicren seems definitely to have the "mali sed non valde" in mind when he describes souls deprived of any hope of Heaven, yet suffering no actual "martiri" beyond intense spiritual grief attendant upon their loss. The outer part of Laicren's Hell is like the cantos in the Inferno describing the approach to the City of Dis proper. Detailed description of the Vision of Laicren:

> Angels conduct Laicren's soul to the Otherworld-He sees Hell, a great glen, opening out of what looks like the mouth of a cave-The cave door and its porch are the doorway to Hell, and huddling there are people under the displeasure of God-In the middle of the glen was a wailing Hell, a sea of fire with unspeakable storms, and with unspeakably high waves upon the sea-In the sea Laicren can see souls aflame, with only their heads out of the fire-The souls are wailing, lamenting, crying woe without ceasing-Fiery nails were struck through their tongues, eyes, and ears-Those with nails through their tongues were the falsifiers-Other souls are there with their mouths gaping, while demons compel them onward with fiery forks-The stormy sea with fierce waves on it is what engages Laicren's attention most-

The description of the tempestuous ocean in the Fis tale discussed above is like a similar passage in the Voyage of St. Brendan.[1]

The Vision of Tundal

History of the vision:

This vision is in Vincent of Beauvais's Spectrum Historiale, 1256, and in Caxton's version of the Golden Legends.[2]

1. Cf. the Voyage of St. Brendan, P. 20, infra.
2. de Voragine, Jacobo, Golden Legends, Tr., W. Caxton, Ed., F.S.Ellis, London,1900. Vol. III,P.79.

It was translated into Latin, circa 1148, by Marcus, an Irish Benedictine monk who was an older contemporary of Richard of St. Victor.[1] Marcus was well-grounded in Biblical, ecclesiastical, and secular literature. He was associated with the Benedictine monastery at Cashel, until after the death of King Cormac[2] when, as so many Irish monks of the twelfth century did, he travelled to Germany.[3] On the way he visited St. Bernard at the Benedictine monastery in Clairvaux. St. Bernard was writing a life of St. Malachy. Then Marcus continued on to Ratisbon in Bavaria where he wrote the Vision of Tundal in a Latin version at the request of the Abbess Gisel, perhaps, or so scholars interpret the "G" on the original manuscript.[4] She was Abbess of the Convent of St. Paul in Ratisbon.[5] A fellow-monk at Ratisbon, Alber, translated the vision from Latin into High German, and left a biography of Marcus.

Biography of Tundal:

Tundal was a noble knight of Cashel who was living an ungodly life, and who scorned spiritual things. He had a trance in Cork, in which he remained as if dead for three days and three nights. He returned to consciousness, converted.

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1. For Richard of St. Victor, see Ch. V, infra.
2. Cormac was the author of the famed Cormac's Glossary.
3. Zimmer, in his comment on how frequently Irish monks left Ireland to travel through Europe, with much benefit to the culture of the continent, to prove his point relates that Irish manuscripts were found at various places outside of Ireland. Zimmer, op. cit.,P.97.
4. An Irish monk, Marianus Scotus, went to Ratisbon in 1076 and was given sustenance by the congregation at the Convent of St. Paul there. He founded the monastery of St. James, in Ratisbon, in 1111. Zimmer, op. cit.P. 88.
5. Boswell believes it more likely that Marcus stayed at the Convent of St. James founded by Marianus Scotus of Donegal. Boswell, op. cit., P. 144.

General description of the Visioni Tundali:

The Vision of Tundal presents the first vivid picture of Satan found in Celtic Vision Literature.[1] There is an amazing variety of torments described in it. Many of them are strikingly reminiscent of the Inferno. Tundal differentiated markedly between Hell, Purgatory, the Earthly Paradise, and Heaven. Also, he makes the journey upward as did Dante. The virtue Tundal comments on particularly is that of faithfulness to the marriage vow, and continence. An unusual feature of Tundal's Heaven is the empty chair he remarks on seeing there. It was for St. Bernard.[2] Dante saw an empty chair in Paradiso, intended for the not yet dead Henry. Tundal describes seven orders in Heaven and tells of the soul's progress through them. He emphasizes the joys of music in Heaven, but otherwise his heaven is inferior to that in the Vision of Adamnan.[3] Tundal was pre-occupied with the pains of Hell. The righteous had to see them so they could glow more ardently with love for God when at last they were admitted into His presence. He quotes the instance of a priest who has to go across the long, tortuous bridge over Hell, but is able to do so easily, because he has gone on a pilgrimage. Tundal was informed that every soul had in it some good (Grace of God, that is) but that it must labor for salvation. Another particularly significant incident in the vision is the dispute over

1. Becker, op. cit., stresses this aspect of the vision. P. 81.
2. The Benedictine monastery at Cashel spread the fame of its great contemporary, Bernard of Clairvaux, through Ireland.
3. Tundal, a sinful man, says Marcus, felt big twinges, perhaps, when he saw what he was earning for himself by his addiction to a pernicious life. Adamnan, on the contrary, was a holy monk. Of Tundal's abbreviated description of Heaven, Dods says, "Tundal fails to bring off Heaven." Dods, op. cit., P. 239.

his body between the fallen angels and the good angels who are escorting him.[1] He, like St. Laicren, sees some not very bad people, and some not very good people, together with the condemned and the saints. The Earthly Paradise he sees is very like that in Plato's Vision of Er, and in the Phaedrus. Tundal describes nine orders of angels in Heaven.[2] He sees a huge monster in Hell, very like Geryon: Dante's and Virgil's "escalator" in Inferno.[3] Tundal gives the loathesome creature the name of Acheron.

Details of the Vision of Tundal:

> Tundal is surrounded by unclean spirits, until he is rescued by a youthful angelic guide. Devils cry out at this, and argue with the angel, but Tundal is borne off safely. The angel leads the soul of Tundal to a valley filled with burning coals over which is an immense iron lid-Souls are roasted until they become liquid-Then they are strained and in glowing coals are renewed again for further torment-These first punishments are for patricides and homicides-Tundal and his guide come to a mountain across which lies narrow paths, on one side of which is fire, and on the other side, ice, snow, and wind,all mingled with hail. Demons armed with forks catch the souls and toss them alternately into heat and cold-This is the punishment of the crafty and treacherous-The angelic guide led Tundal to a valley with a plank across it that was a thousand feet long and one foot wide. Many try to walk across, but all fall off except a priest who has gone on a pilgrimage. This was the punishment of the proud.Next they come to a beast bigger than a mountain with eyes like fiery hills.Fire comes from his mouth whence souls are entering-4.-The beast is named Acheron. Among the men propping up his jaws, Tundal recognizes Fergus and Conall-5.This was the punishment of the covetous-They come to a stormy lake, across which is a bridge two miles long, and a hand's breadth in width, all studded with sharp spikes-6.-Underneath are fire eating monsters-

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1. A resemblance to the Chaldean Elysium. Cf. P. 33, infra.
2. This is the number Dante uses. See Celestial Hierarchy, Dionysius, tr.,Erigena, Ch. V, infra.
3. Inf.XVII, 79-134.
4. The Egyptian Eater of the Dead is much like Tundal's Acheron.
5. These are the names of Irish kings.
6. The "bridge" incident is the most frequently encountered in Otherworld literature.

Souls are going across with sheaves of corn-This was the punishment of thieves-Tundal and his guide come to the guest house of Phristin-1.-Near the house are executioners armed with axes, knives, augers, sickles, spades, and other implements-They come to a beast with two long pairs of wings, a long beak, and talons of iron-He is sitting on a frozen pond-Drowned souls surround him-They come out of the pond again as ice, are renewed, and tormented all over again-These are the religious who have lived unchastely-Next they come to a valley full of forges, with a vulcan[2]-This was for those who had heaped sin on sin-Now Tundal sees darkness and intolerable cold, along with stinking flames-He sees the devil in torment in the pit-The devil is black as a raven, with the form of a man's body from head to foot, except for his many hands and his tail-He had one thousand hands, each with long nails-The devil was tossing in agony on an iron grate-He squeezed souls as he lashed out with his tail-Nearby Tundal and his guide see a group of men and women enduring rain and cold, hunger and thirst, but possessed of LIGHT(These are like the "mali sed non valde" of Dante)-They come now to a gate that opens up of its own accord-Inside is a fair field, flower bespangled, redolent with perfume-3.-There is a fountain of life within-Tundal sees a palace where Cormac is enthroned-4.-Once a day he is tormented by snakes-5.-Tundal finds that there is a special reward in Heaven for married persons who have kept their vows well-(This resembles the level of virtue Dante suggests as the "boni sed non valde")-Martyrs and continent persons had another special heaven. There is one for monks and nuns, and one for defenders of the Church, and Church constructors-They come to a high wall built of precious stones, including crystal, chrysolite, beryl, jasper, jacinth, emerald, sapphire, topaz, amethyst, turquoise, and garnet, with gold for mortar-Inside are nine orders of angels-St. Patrick is one of the saints within-A chair for St. Bernard is there-

The vision ends more abruptly than the other Fis described in the chapter. Vossler pronounces the Vision of Tundal to be the "most complete poem of future life composed by an Irish monk. It was popular at the time of Dante."[6] The vulcan episode seems much like a similar incident in the Voyage of Bran .

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1. Cf. n. 3, P. 12, infra.
2. Cf. Voyage of Bran, P. 13, "island of big blacksmiths."
3. A resemblance to the Chaldean and Zoroastrean Elysium.
4. The punishment Cormac endures in Heaven is like Dante's treatment of the imperfect kings whom he places in Purgatory, in what is often referred to as the Valley of the Princes. Purg. VII, VIII. Cormac's throne-city was Cashel, Tundal's home.
6. Vossler, op. cit., Vol. II, P. 125.

The Vision of St. Fursa

History of the vision:

The vision is a twelfth century manuscript translated into Latin in the Codex Salmanticensis, Acta Sanctorum Hibernia, and translated into English by Reverend Christopher McCready. The vision is written in the Book of Leinster, and compiled in the Annals of the Four Masters. It is in Bede's Ecclesiastical History, Book III,[1] and in the Homilies of Aelfric, Volume II, P. 333, and was celebrated in mediaeval Europe.

Biography of St. Fursa:

Fursa, or Furseus, was born in 570, shortly before the death of St. Brendan. He was the son of Fintan, son of Finlog, a pagan king of Munster. His mother was Gelgas, daughter of Aed-Finn, King of Connaught. Fintan became converted by Gelgas, but their marriage was performed secretly.[2] The King of Connaught was angry when he found out about it and banished the couple from his province. They went to Lough Corrib in Galway, where St. Brendan the Traveller presided over the monastery now known as Inisquin. Fursa was born on the island and baptized by St. Brendan. Fursa means "virtue". He was educated at his uncle's monastery and when very young was noted for his unusual zeal and piety. When Fursa was old enough, he embraced the religious life in the same monastery, then under the direction of the Abbot St. Meldon. Fursa lived a holy life there and some years afterward founded a monastery of his own at Lough Corrib. The church attached to Fursa's

1. Bede, The Venerable, Opera Historica, King (Ed.), Vol.I, P.414.
2. According to legend, Aed-Finn was furious because his daughter married without his consent, and ordered her burned. She was saved by a miracle.

monastery, Killfursa, is still standing in Galway.[1] He was anxious to recruit monks for his monastery from his father's home in Munster, and while going to conduct them to Inisquin, he became sick and fell into a trance from which he awoke "when the cock crew at sunrise". The next day he recounted a vision he had had during his unconscious condition. Three nights later he had another vision, much more elaborate than the first. He related that he wanted to remain in the Otherworld but angels bade him return to his body and preach to men.[2]

In 633 Fursa went to East Anglia and met King Sigebert. He stayed there converting the Picts and Saxons. Sigebert gave him land for a monastery in Suffolk, on the site of a Roman camp known as Burgh Castle or Cnobberesburg, in the Gaelic version. War came to Britain and Fursa crossed over to Gall in 648. Clovis II extended a welcome to him, by way of the Governor of Peronne, whom he deputized as his representative.[3] Shortly after landing in Gall, Fursa restored to life the dead son of the Duke of Haymon. Immediately the monk became famous throughout the countryside. The village where he brought the boy back to life was named for the saint, Forsheim or House of Fursa. It is now in two parts. Forhen-le-Grand, and Forhen-le-Petit. In the latter there is a church dedicated to St. Fursa. Fursa was given land near Paris for a monastery and founded Lagny there, with the help of King Clovis and his queen, Bathilda. On January 16, 653, when he

1. Gibbings, Robert, Lovely Is the Lee, P.82. New York, E.P.Dutton & Co.,1945.
2. Cf. the Vision of Adamnan, P. 40, infra.
3. St. Riquier's Monastery is built where Fursa landed.

was on his way back to Cnobberesburg, Fursa died some distance from the village of Peronne, so an ox-cart bore his body there, where it lay in state for thirty days. Persons who went to the church where the body remained for veneration, noted the sweet odor it gave out. Four years later the body was put in a special chapel east of the main altar in a very beautiful Gothic Church known as the Collegiate Church of St. Fursey. The Church was destroyed in 1807 during the latter part of the French Revolution, but the skull of the saint remained intact. It was then transferred to the Church of St. Jean the Baptist. During the Prussian War, in 1870, the latter church was damaged, but the skull was found under the ruins. The Church has three Gothic arches, in one of which is a figure of Fursa. A large stained-glass window depicts the saint's good works. Over the altar are three statues, the central one of St. Fursa, the one on the left and right, Ultan and Foillan, his brothers.[1] A plaque reads,

> "La face fut extraordinairement conservé au milieu de l'incendie occasionné par le bombardement prussien de 1870. Elle fut retrouvée au milieu des décombres de l'Eglise, recouvertée de l'enveloppe en cristal de son reliquaire liquefiée sans l'action du feu, et qui après l'avoir préservée en a conservée l'empreinte."[2]

St. Fursa is the patron saint of Peronne.[3] The city claims that he has kept it from destruction and has a banner, Urbs Nescia Vincis, attesting the saint's protection. An office to St. Fursa is recited in the Church on January 16, and a procession takes place, during which an ox-cart, "Le char de s. Fursey", is driven through the streets. A Celtic

1. Dahl, Louis, The Roman Camp and the Irish Saint. Jarrold & Son, London, 1913. P. 66.
2. Stokes, Margaret, Three Months in the Forests of France. London, Bell, 1895.
3. A painting in the Hotel de Ville, Peronne, depicts the works of Fursa's life. Illustration, Stokes, op. cit.

cross in the graveyard at Cnobberesburg, now an Anglican Church, bears the inscription in Gaelic,

"Naco Fursa Teagastoir.
Naco Fursa Absdal." 1.

St. Fursa is represented in art with the point of his staff striking water from the soil,[2] or beholding the visions of angels, or gazing at sinners in Purgatory and Hell.[3]

General description of the Vision of Fursa:

Fursa saw souls, not burning in Hell for their ill-deeds, but, because they obtained remission of their sins through confession or by renunciation of the works of the devil, undergoing a form of Purgatory. The struggle of the good angels against the bad angels was the occasion of intense noise. The angel conducting Fursa to the world after death left him alone for a minute, and demons clamored at him. In Heaven, all was calm and full of bright light. Four bands of singers and a choir of angels chanted psalms in an impressive crescendo and diminuendo manner. Fursa saw, among the saints in Heaven, his former abbot, Meldon, who gave him advice on what to say to men when he, Fursa, returned to earth. Meldon inveighed especially against the sin of pride, and against misuse of their authority on the part of the clergy. Dante refers to his own defect against the virtue of humility, and his whole poem is often thought to be a criticism of malpractices, as he saw them, in the Church Militant. Meldon is specific in his catalog of ways in which the clergy fall short.

1. The inscription means in English, "Here lies Fursa, Teacher. Here lies Fursa, Apostle." Dahl, op. cit., P. 91.
2. Fursa was credited with many miracles, and like St. Fiacre, among them was the ability to bring water from barren soil.
3. This representation refers to his vision.

He berated them for being neglectful of the faithful, avaricious, weak, idle, easily provoked, vain-glorious. Irish clerics were not over-fond of Roman fetters, so Fursa, like Dante, may have felt spleen against the Church as governed from Rome.[1] Fursa relates that a demon threw a burning soul at him while he was in the Otherworld, and he is said to have borne the scar all his life. Dante was supposed to have had a singed beard always after writing the Divine Comedy.

Detailed description of the Vision of Fursa:

> First night: Four winged hands stretch downwards from above-Lifting Fursa above their snowy wings,[2] the angelic supports bear him upward-He gradually discerns two angels preceded by a third with a white shield and a shining sword-As he is being carried upward, he sees the state of man in sin-He hears angelic choirs singing praises to God and the effect is one of "risurgi et vinci". They are singing, "Ibunt Sancti de virtute in virtutem", "Exierunt obviam Christo", "Videbitur Deus Deorum in Syon", "Hosanna Sanctus Deus Sabaoth"-A voice from the heavenly host bids an angel armed, going before, to lead the holy man back to his body-Fursa asks them to let him stay , but the blessed spirits, using the angels as purveyors of their message reply, "We shall return for you when you have completed your daily work."
>
> Third night: Fursa was receiving visits from his relatives when darkness again fell upon him, his feet grew stiff with cold, and remembering what happened three nights earlier, he prepared himself for another glimpse of the next world-This time Fursa says that he hears a horrible noise, as from a multitude-He can see no one but the angels, one on each side, ~~one on each side~~, one in front-They assure him they will protect and defend him-They take him onward and he sees an army of demons-They are all howling and crying-The bodies of the demons are deformed and black-3.-Their necks are scrawy, long, extended, and their heads are swollen-4.-The demons throw fiery darts at Fursa, which are warded off by the angels' shields-They keep arguing with the angels, claiming that Fursa has no right to Heaven-5.-Six times the angels fight with the demons to retain possession of Fursa's body-Once

1. Cf. P. 35 infra, and n. 4, ibid., the Celtic Church vs. Saxon.
2. This is like Dante's description of angels, "tanto bianco che nulla neve a quel termine arriva." Par.XXXI, 12.
3. Cf. P. 18 infra, the Voyage of Ui Corra.
4. These details reveal the Irish love of caricature.
5. Cf. P. 44 infra, the Vision of Tundal.

while they were battling for him, he was temporarily left by himself. The saint was in fear and trembling, until the angels came back and safeguarded him-Then one of the angels tells Fursa to look down at the world-He sees four fires in Hell-An angel tells him that one fire is for men who love falsehood, one is for men who have been avaricious, one is for men who have stirred up strife and discord, and one is for men who practise fraud and impiety-1.-The fire parts to let Fursa and his escorts through-The devils have again to be beaten off by angels-They now ascend and Fursa hears angels singing-The angels fly before him like great flocks of birds with gleaming wings-Fursa sees Meldon-A bright light shines forth and hosts of angels sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of Hosts".Meldon talks to Fursa about the sins of Churchmen-The worst is pride, he says-He tells Fursa to abjure the priests of Holy Church to do their duty-On the way back to earth, the angels and Fursa go unscathed through the fire, but a devil throws a tortured sinner at Fursa, and it burns him. He bore the scar until his death-The angel says it is the result of a fault in Fursa's previous life on earth, namely that he had accepted a cloak from a dying sinner, and the fire consuming the owner of the cloak, whom the demon selected to throw through the flames at Fursa, burned the saint, too. When they reach the earth once more, the angels again bid Fursa to "work harder for the Lord"-

Bede records that Fursa went on persuading men to virtue, by example and preaching. He would tell the visions only to those who, from a desire for reformation, wanted to hear them. Testifying to the vividness of Fursa's account of his visions, Bede says that although it was a cold day in winter when he was telling of his revelations on one occasion, and he had on only a thin garment, the saint was covered with sweat.

General characteristics of Irish visions:

A heavenly guide is common to Irish visions of the Otherworld. Quite often a detailed description of the guide is given, as in the case of St. Adamnan and St. Fursa. In some instances, the angelic escorts protect their charges as they did Tundal and Fursa, for example. The celestial realm is separate from the Earthly Paradise in the Vision

1. Dante puts the Sins of Avarizia" lowest in Inferno.

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of Tundal, and in the Visions of Adamnan, Laicren, and Tundal, a place very like Purgatory is described. A wall, or series of walls, surrounds Heaven, either solid as in Tundal, where it is built of precious stones, or of brilliant fire as in Adamnan. Intensity of color, radiance, and the LIGHT that characterizes Heaven are other common attributes. The Throne of God is specifically described. To reach the Divine Presence, the soul ascends progressively through succeedingly rarefied regions. God Himself is not to be beheld. The sounding columns of His Throne are often described. Music invariably accompanies the contemplation of God. Usually it is provided by angelic choirs. Often the angels are in a multitude of ranks. The inhabitants of Heaven are told of carefully. They are ready to lend aid to humans. Trees with fruit and birds are part of Heaven. Hell is described chiefly as a cavelike place, with a pit at the bottom, memorable most of all for its DARKNESS, bad smells, fire, and horrible weather. Noise is noted frequently, coming either from the collision of cold and hot belts or from the wailings of tormented souls, or from the howlings of demons. Punishments vary to suit the sins of the individual soul. As the Divine Comedy was for the purpose of leading the soul to union with God, so Celtic visions had a purpose beyond that of entertainment. Adamnan and Fursa were to exhort the faithful, and Tundal was to be converted. The scourgings of Hell, begun to be noted in the Voyage Literature, have grown far more graphic in the Vision Literature. Demons with weapons driving souls into boiling liquids are found. Souls brought out for resuscitation only to be tortured all over again occur in several. Alternating

fire and ice tortures are mentioned, applied by devils armed with forks. The damned made to go across long, narrow nail-studded pathways, over chasms or lakes, and laden with burdens in addition, are found. A horrible beast who chewed souls was seen in one vision. The only vision to have a personification of Satan is the Vision of Tundal, which, in the language of today, is the most sophisticated of the Celtic Vision legends. Criticism of the Church is a feature of Fursa's vision, but references to the clergy come in several other places.

Boswell says that Irish visions "set a literary fashion, whereby Visions of the Otherworld came to be regarded as the most natural vehicle for conveying man's thoughts, imaginations, as in other ages the epic, drama, dialogue, pamphlet, and novel were especially effected for the purpose."[1].

General Parallels between Fis and the Commedia:

In both Celtic Vision legends and The Divine Comedy there are many resemblances to classical Otherworld literature. The Chaldean Elysium in which food grows without seeds or tillage is much like Dante's description of the way crops grow in the Earthly Paradise, that Matilda tells to the poet in Canto XXVIII, 103-120, of Purgatorio. The motion of the pure air there which she says is the cause of the Divinely-patterned insemination reminds the reader of the sweet-scented breeze that blew on the righteous soul, in the Zoroastrean Elysium, for three nights after death. Conversely, in the Celtic Vision of Adamnan a cold wind blows on the souls

1. Boswell, op. cit., P. 246.

in Hell. From Hebrew literature concerning the Otherworld, the reference to the enemies gnawing one another is similar to Dante's often-quoted description of Ugolino and his adversary in the Cocytus of Inferno, Canto XXXII, 124-139. Highly eminent scholars in the field, among them Zimmer, Meyer, Nutt, and Boswell, notably, conclude that Celtic culture is pre-eminently from the Greek. Dante, to judge by his erudition, held Greek civilization in high esteem and, although he seems to have known Greek literature and philosophy through Latin translations, was in accord with Greek traditions of culture.[1] The persistent feeling of sorrow over a joy long anticipated, within grasp, and then lost forever or for a long time, that Adamnan stresses having observed among the souls in Purgatory and Hell strongly resembles that terribly poignant "maggior dolore" to which Francesca confesses she is condemned in Canto V, 121-123, of Inferno. The rose pattern of Heaven described by Adamnan[2] is an interesting similarity between a Celtic legend and Dante's Paradiso. The gradually developed differentiations between Hell, Purgatory, the Earthly Paradise, and Heaven, and intimations of an ideology about "male sed non valde" and "boni sed non valde" groups in the Otherworld are further broad parallels seen in Celtic Fis and in the Commedia. Heavenly spirits bid Adamnan and Fursa go back to earth and preach to men what they have gleaned from their journeys to

1. Zimmer, reiterating his point that Celtic monks alone knew Greek in the early Middle Ages, tells about a general council called by Gregory the Great, before which a learned Spanish bishop, Claudius of Turin, had to defend his views, but could do so only in Greek, hence Dulgan, Irish, translated. Zimmer, op. cit., P. 10.
2. For further comment on the "rose", see Ch. VI, infra.

the next world, as Beatrice bids Dante in Canto XXXIII, 52-57, of Purgatorio. She advises him to inform those on earth of the damage possible to the Church when her representatives here depart too far from their role of spiritual guides. A group of specific parallels found in Celtic Fis and in the Commedia follow below.

Specific Parallels between Celtic Fis and The Divine Comedy

Guide to the Other-world
Cf. Adamnan
Tundal
Fursa

.....ed io sarò tua guida
e trarrotti di qui per luogo eterno,
Inf.I, 113,114.

Light in Heaven
Cf. Adamnan
Fursa

nella profonda e chiara sussistenza
dell'alto lume parvenni tre giri
di tre colori e d'una continenza.
Par. XXXIII, 115-117.

La prima luce, che tutta la raia
Par. XXIX, 136.

Nel ciel che più della sua luce prende
fu'io;
Par. I, 4.

A quella luce cotal si diventa,
che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto
è impossibil che mai si consenta.
Par. XXXIII, 100-103.

Angels like candles
Cf. Adamnan

vidi più di mille Angeli festanti,
ciascun distinto e di fulgore e d'arte.
Par. XXXI, 131, 132.

Le facce tutte avean di fiamma viva,
Par. XXXI, 13.

Angels being protective to humans
Cf. Adamnan
Fursa
Tundal

Tra l'erba e i fior venia la mala striscia
.....
Sentendo fender l'aere alle verdi ali,
fuggì il serpente, e gli angeli dier volta
Purg..VIII, 100; 106,107.

l'angel di Dio mi prese, e quel
d'inferno
gridava: 'O tu del ciel, perchè mi
privi?'
Purg. VIII, 104,105. 1.

vid'io più di mille anime distrutta
fuggir così dinanzi ad un, ...
.....
Ben m'accorsi ch'egli era del ciel
messo,
Inf.IX, 79,80; 85.

Wall dividing Heaven
Cf. Tundal

.....questa sono il muro
a che si parton le sacre scalee.
Par.XXXII, 20,21.

Colored wall in Heaven
Cf. Adamnan

Oro ed argento fino, cocco e biacca,
indico legno lucido e sereno,
fresco smeraldo in l'ora che si
fiacca,
Purg.VII, 73-75.

Gradations of Heaven
Cf. Adamnan

puoi tu veder così di soglia in soglia
giù digradar, com'io ch'a proprio
nome
vo per la rosa giù di foglia in
foglia.
Par.XXXII, 13-15.

Three precious stones between Heavens
Cf. Adamnan

Là've venimmo, allo scaglion primaio,
bianco marmo.....
.....
Era il secondo tinto più che perso
.....
Lo terzo, che di sopra s'ammassiccia,
porfido mi parea sì fiammeggiante,
Purg.IX, 94,95; 97; 100,
101.

Inhabitants of Heaven
Mary
Cf. Adamnan

Qui sei a noi meridiana face
di caritate,.....
Par.XXXIII, 10,11 2.

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1. This is especially like the Vision of Fursa.
2. Dante is addressing the Blessed Virgin. The canto begins "Vergine madre". IX,1.in Par.

Apostles around Mary
Cf. Adamnan

Quivi è la Rosa, in che il Verbo divino
carne si fece; quivi son li Gigli,
al cui odor si prese il buon cammino.
Par. XXIII, 73-75.

Saints concerned with humans
Cf. Fursa

vedi Beatrice con quanti beati
per li miei preghi ti chiudon le mani
Par. XXXIII, 38,39.

Children
Cf. Adamnan

Ben te ne puoi accorger per li volti,
ed anco per le voci puerili,.....
Par. XXXII, 46,47.

Vacant chair in Heaven
Cf. Tundal

In quel gran seggio,.....
.....
sederà l'alma,.....
dell'alto Enrico,.....
Par. XXX, 133; 136,137.

Chastity in matrimony
Cf. Tundal

.....indi donne
gridavano e mariti che fur casti,
come virtute e matrimonio imponne.
Purg. XXV, 133-135.

Angel bidding a human to look at the earth
Cf. Fursa

Onde la donna, che mi vide assolto
dell'attendere in su, mi disse: "Adima
il viso, e guarda come tu sei volto."
Par. XXVII, 76-78.

Singing in Heaven
Cf. Fursa

Sì com'io tacqui, un dolcissimo canto
risonò per lo cielo, e la mia donna
dicea con gli altri: "Santo, Santo,
Santo!"
Par. XXVI, 67-69.

"Risurgi e vinci"
Cf. Fursa

Tale imagine appunto mi rendea
ciò ch'io udiva, qual prender si suole
quando a cantar con organi si stea:

che or sì or no s'intendon le parole.
Purg. IX, 142-145.

Ben m'accors'io ch'ell'era d'alte lode,
però che a me venia:"Risurgi e vinci,"
com'a colui che non intende ed ode.
Par. XIV, 124-126.

Resounding door in Heaven 1.
Cf. Adamnan

E quando fur nè'cardini distorti
gli spigoli di quella regge sacra
che di metallo son sonanti e forti,

non rugghìo sì, nè si mostrò sì acra
Tarpeia,
Purg.IX, 133-137.

Perfume of flowers
Cf. Tundal

..ma.di soavità di mille odori
Purg. VII, 80

Melancholy people in the doorway of Hell
Cf. Laicren

Loco è laggiù non tristo da martiri
ma di tenebre solo, ove i lamenti
non suonan come guai, ma son
sospiri.
Purg. VII, 28-30.

The pit of Hell 2.
Cf. Laicren

.....che dall'infima lacuna
dell'universo infin qui ha vedute
le vite spiritali ad una ad una
Par. XXXIII, 22-24.

Bridge over Hell, People with icy cowls
Cf. Adamnan

Egli avean cappe con cappucci bassi
dinanzi agli occhi, fatte della taglia
che per li monaci in Cologna fassi.

Di fuor dorate son sì ch'egli abbaglia,
ma dentro tutte piombo, e gravi tanto,
che Federico le mettea di paglia.
Inf.XXIII, 61-66.

Re-application of punishment
Cf. Tundal

Un diavolo è qua dietro che n'accisma
sì crudelmente, al taglio della
spada
rimettendo ciascun di questa risma,

quando avem volta la dolente strada;
però che le ferite son richiuse
prima ch'altri dinanzi gli rivada.
Inf. XXVIII, 37-42.

Devil with sinners in his mouth
Cf. Tundal

Da ogni bocca dirompea coi denti
un peccatore, a guisa di maciulla,
Inf. XXXIV, 55,56.

1. This is like the melodious stones between the gradations of Adamnan's Heaven. The parallel is in the sound coming from the stones and from the portal.
2. Laicren emphasizes looking down into the abyss of Hell.

Coldness of Hell
Cf. Adamnan

Com'io divenni allor gelato e fioco,
.....
Lo imperador del doloroso regno
da mezzo il petto uscia fuor della ghiaccia;
.....
Quindi Cocito tutto s'aggeleva;
Inf. XXXIV, 22; 28,29; 52.

Thirst for a punishment
Cf. Laicren

Tutta esta gente, che piangendo canta,
per seguitar la gola oltra misura
in fame e in sete qui si rifà santa.
Purg. XXIII, 64-66.

Ice, snow, foul water for punishments
Cf. Laicren

Io sono al terzo cerchio della piova
eterna, maledetta, fredda e greve;
.....Inf. VI, 7,8.

Evil smell in Hell
Cf. Adamnan

Grandine grossa, e acqua tinta, e neve
per l'aer tenebrosa si riversa;
pute la terra che questo riceve.
Inf. VI, 10-12.

Pierced tongue for a punishment
Cf. Laicren

"A te sia rea la sete onde ti crepa,"
disse il Greco, "la lingua,.....
Inf. XXX, 121, 122.

Geryon, like Acheron
Cf. Tundal

e d'un serpente tutto l'altro fusto.
Due branche avea pilose infin l'ascelle;
lo dosso e il petto ed ambedue le coste
dipinte avea di nodi e di rotelle:
Inf. XVII, 12-15.

Demons with forks
Cf. Tundal
Fursa
Laicren

Poi l'addentar con più di cento raffi;
Inf. XXI, 52.

Lids over souls in Hell
Cf. Tundal

ché tra gli avelli fiamme erano sparte,
per le quali eran sì del tutto accesi,
che ferro più non chieda verun'arte.
Inf. IX, 118-120.

Darkness of Purgatory, Hell
Cf. Tundal

e vengo in parte, ove non è che luca.
Inf. IV, 151.

Io venni in loco d'ogni luce muto,
Inf. V, 28.

Noise in Hell
Cf. Laicren
Fursa
Adamnan

ma negli orecchi mi percosse un duolo,
Inf. VIII, 65.

Urlar gli fa la pioggia come cani;
.....
cotai se fecer quelle facce lorde
dello demonio Cerbero che introna
l'anime sì, ch'esser vorrebber sorde.
Inf. VI, 19; 31-33.

Criticism of the Church
Cf. Fursa
vain-glorious clergy

Voi non andate giù per un sentiero
filosofando; tanto vi trasporta
l'amor dell'apparenza e il suo pensiero.
Par. XXIX, 85-87.

clergy neglecting the word of God

Per apparer ciascun s'ingegna, e face
sue invenzioni, e quelle son trascorse
dai predicanti, e il vangelio si tace.
Par. XXIX, 94-96.

clergy being unfaithful shepherds by not preaching well

sì che le pecorelle, che non sanno,
tornan dal pasco pasciute di vento,
Par. XXIX, 106, 107.

clergy delivering shallow sermons

Non disse Cristo al suo primo convento:
Andate e predicate al mondo ciance,
ma diede lor verace fondamento;
Par. XXIX, 109-111.

clergy too fond of money

Fatto v'avete Dio d'oro e d'argento;
e che altro è da voi all'idolatre,
se non ch'egli uno, e voi n'orate cento?
Inf. XIX, 112-114.

Dante's pride
Cf. Fursa

Ed io a lui: "Lo tuo ver dir m'incora
buona umiltà, e gran tumor m'appiani;
Purg. XI, 118, 119.

Warder of Heaven
Cf. Adamnan

vidi una porta, e tre gradi di sotto
per gire ad essa, di color diversi,
ed un portier che ancor non facea motto.

E come l'occhio più v'apersi,
vidil seder sopra il grado soprano,
tal nella faccia, ch'io non lo soffersi;
Purg. IX, 76-81.

Angel conducting mortals from one part of Heaven to another
Cf. Adamnan

"messo è, che viene ad invitar ch'uom saglia.
Purg. XV, 30.

Poi giunti fummo all'angel benedetto,
con lieta voce disse: "Entrate quinci
ad un scaleo vie men che gli altri eretto."
Purg. XV, 34-36.

A cleansing spring before Heaven
Cf. Adamnan

Ma vedi Eunoè che là deriva:
menalo ad esso, e, come tu sei usa
la tramortita sua virtù ravviva.
Purg.XXXIII, 127-129.

Di penter sì mi punse ivi l'ortica
.....
Tanta riconoscenza il cor mi morse,
ch'io caddi vinto,.....
.....
Tratto m'avea nel fiume infino a gola,
Purg. XXXI,85;88,89;94.

A narrow path over flames
Cf. Adamnan

Quivi la ripa fiamma in fuor balestra,
e la cornice spira fiato in suso,
che la riflette, e via da lei sequestra:

onde ir ne convenìa dal lato schiuso
ad uno ad uno; ed io temeva il foco
quinci, e quindi temea cadere in giuso.
Purg. XXV, 112-117.

CHAPTER IV

ST. PATRICK'S PURGATORY

Celtic Imrama and Celtic Fis are both concerned with the Otherworld and the rewards and punishments awaiting individuals there, but St. Patrick's Purgatory, the legend discussed in the present chapter, takes its name from an actual cave on an island in Lough Derg (Red Lake) in Donegal that was used as a place of atonement in this world. St. Patrick (389-461) was said to have opened the cave for hallowed purposes, which, according to chronology, would make the Purgatory date from the fifth century. Its renown in mediaeval times, however, was most widespread from the twelfth century when Knight Owen (protagonist of the legend in its most popular form) descended into the cavern that St. Patrick had consecrated to God. It was the description of his experiences in the purgatorial realm that was written down and circulated by mediaeval chroniclers.

Labitte says of the légend, "C'est une de celles qui probablement furent connues d'Alighieri"[1], and he goes on, "Je ne mets pas en doute que l'auteur de la Divine Comédie n'ait directement connu cette légende; le souvenir s'en retrouve à bien des endroits du poème, et les rapprochements sont trop faciles pour qu'il soit besoin de les indiquer. Peu importe,"[2]. Which is true. Whether Dante knew the story of St. Patrick's Purgatory that so closely resembles much of the Inferno and Purgatorio is beside the point. What is of value, is to note how similar is the material used by poets nourished at the

1. Labitte, op. cit., P. 126.
2. Labitte, op. cit., P. 128.

same general fount of culture. This chapter will show instances of parallels between the twelfth century Celtic legend, St. Patrick's Purgatory[1] and the fourteenth century Divine Comedy. They are numerous.

The legend was well-known in the Middle Ages. Campion writes, "Every history of Ireland that I have seen has one title, 'De Mirabilibus Hiberniae'."[2] Marie de France translated it from Latin into French and thus it was included in the repertory of the trouvères, and taken into England during the reign of Henry II. Henry's queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine, was Marie de France's sister and the poetess has left records of visiting the English court. Matthew Paris, Vincent of Beauvais[3], and Gautier de Metz[4] compiled the legend in their works. Leslie says of them, "Brunetto Latini was influenced by Gautier de Metz's Imago Mundi and by Beauvais's Speculum Historiale, both of which have St. Patrick's Purgatory on maps of Ireland."[5] Jacobo de Voragine, who was an older contemporary of Dante[6], and to whom Toynbee[7] thinks Dante refers indirectly in his De Monarchia[8], included St. Patrick's

1. Although in existence from the fifth century, it was Owen in the twelfth century who popularized the legend.
2. Campion, Edmund, History of Ireland, 1571. New York, Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1940. P. 39.
3. 1250 is the date usually given for his Speculum Historiale.
4. Caxton states that the Imago Mundi was translated into French in 1245. Caxton, W. Mirror of the World, (Ed. O. Prior) London, Publ. for Early Eng. Text Soc., Oxford Univ.Press,1913. "St. Patrick's Purgatory", P. 98.
5. Leslie, Shane, St. Patrick's Purgatory, London, Burns, Oates, Washburn, Ltd. 1932. Intro. xliii. Brunetto Latini is mentioned by Dante in Inf. XV, 22-114.
6. De Voragine was Archbishop of Genoa. (1292-1298).
7. Toynbee, Paget, Dante Studies and Researches, London, Methuen & Co., 1902. P. 297.
8. De Monarchia, Bk.II,Ch.V.40-42. Dante comments that the chief virtue of a Roman emperor should be "pietatis". In the Legenda Aurea, "St. Sylvester", de Voragine says exactly the same thing.

Purgatory in his Golden Legends. Fazio degli Uberti of Florence has several verses about it in Il Dittamondo[1] that show how the tale and its location were accepted in mediaeval writings. A quotation from Uberti follows,

> "Similimente passanno in Irlanda
> La qual fra noi é degna di gran fama
> Per le nobili saje che ci manda.
> ....
> Così cercando il paese remoto
> E domandando ci fu dato indizio
> D'un monister molto santo e devoto.
> Là ci traemmo, e là fu il nostro ospizio,
> Poi que'buon frati al pozzo ne menaro,
> Lo qual dà fama al beato Patrizio."
> Bk. IV, Cap. XXVI.

Solino, Fazio's guide, asks if they shall enter the Purgatory, but Fazio says they will not. Solino expresses his approval of the decision by remarking, "You might not return." He adds that he doubts the genuineness of many visions, but not Patrick's. Fazio has a long description of the scenery around Derg. He notes the spring-like quality of the climate.

Rabelais refers to the story in the Fifth Book of Pantagruel. Caesarius of Heisterbach[2] wrote about it in a very specific way when he said, "If anyone doubts Purgatory, let him go to Ireland and enter St. Patrick's Purgatory." Then Caesarius added these details,

> "Non est peccator adeo magnus cui alia satisfactio iniungatur, quam ut una nocte in eodem sit purgatorio. Videbis, inquiunt, hoc nocte, insultus daemonum, et poenas horribiles; sed non poterunt te laedere, si nomen Jesu semper habueris in ore. Multi ibi perierunt, multi etiam reversi sunt;"
> Distinctio Duodecimo, Cap. 38.

1. Uberti, Fazio degli, Il Dittamondo, (Giovanni Silvestri, Ed.) Milano, 1826.
2. Caesarii Heisterbacensis Monachi (ordinis Cisterciensis) Dialogus Miraculorum. (Josephus Strange, Ed.) Vol.II. Coloniae, Bonnae et Bruxellis, H. Lampertz & Co., 1851. "De Purgatorio Sanctii Patricii".

Giraldus Cambrensis[1] had an account of the story of Knight Owen in his Topographia Hibernia, cap.V. Cambrensis wrote about the many strange islands in Lough Derg. The particular one on which the Purgatory was he entitles: "An Island, One Part of Which Is Frequented by Good Spirits, the Other by Evil Spirits." He says the island is divided into paradisial and purgatorial regions. The purgatorial side has nine pits, and anyone who spends the night there is subject to torture by evil spirits. One who once submits to these torments will never afterwards undergo the pains of Hell, unless he commits some sin of a deeper dye. It is Cambrensis whom Campion quotes in his chapter, "St. Patrick's Purgatory".[2] No other chronicler mentions the two contrasting sides of the island in Lough Derg on which the Purgatory was located. Keating[3] points out many false statements in Cambrensis's statements about Ireland.

Keating tells an anecdote concerning the legend that took place during the reign of King Roderick O'Connor of Ireland, High-King during the second part of the twelfth century that, as Keating relates it, occasioned the coming of the English to Ireland. When the king of Breifne went on a pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory, his wife went off with the king of Leinster, pretending later that she had been seized by force. Her husband applied to Roderick for help in punishing the queen's apprehendor, who thereupon

1. Historical Works of Cambrensis, Thomas Wright,Ed., Thomas Forester, Translator. London, Bell, 1913.
2. Campion, op. cit.
3. Jeoffrey Keating, op. cit.

left his kingdom to go to England to seek the aid of Henry II. Pope Adrian IV had"given" Ireland to Henry II in 1154.[1] (Popes had had custody of the country since 1092 when the principal nobility in Ireland, dissatisfied with Donough, son of Bryen Boroimhe, presented the island to Pope Urbanus II.) The king of England responded to the appeal for help by going across to Ireland and beginning English rule there.

Ariosto[2] quotes the Irish Purgatory in Orlando Furioso.[3] He writes,

> E vide Ibernia fabulosa, dove
> Il santo vecchiarel fece la cava
> In che tanta mercé par che si trove,
> Che l'uom vi purga ogni sua colpa prava.
>
> Canto X, 92.

Persons came from all over the continent to make the famed pilgrimage at Derg. The monastery nearby flourished under the zeal of the holy St. Dabheoc.[4] Malatesta Ungara of Rimini, Edward III of England,[5] and Louis of France were among those tho visited the Purgatory. Queen Henrietta, mother of Charles II and James II of England, has left a reference to it in her correspondence.[6] She wrote Wentworth to spare Derg and allow the pilgrimages there to continue. She was too late. Wentworth (Lord Stafford) answered to say the monastery was

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1. Keating, op. cit., P. 534. The account of Roderick's reign and the incident concerning St. Patrick's Purgatory are in Keating, op. cit., P. 519.
2. Ariosto Lodovic, L'Orlando Furioso. Parigi, 1836.
3. Cancelliori uses Ariosto's reference in commenting on the "Viaggi del Pozzo di s. Patricio". op. cit., P. 10.
4. For St. Dabheoc, see O'Hanlon, Lives of Irish Saints, Vol.10, P. 15. Dublin, Duffy, 1875.
5. O'Connor, Daniel, St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg, Dublin, Duffy, 1895. Refers to Gilbert's History of Viceroys.
6. Henrietta's letter to Wentworth, 1638, in the Ulster Journal of Archaeology, is quoted in O'Connor, op.cit., P. 156.

destroyed.[1] Derg drew pilgrims until the final demolition of the monastery. The latter edifice had a long history of destruction and re-building. It was closed in 1497 by order of Pope Adrian VI, who feared people were attaching too much superstitious import to the spot.

The legend figures in modern literature to some extent. Calderón wrote a play, The Purgatory of St. Patrick. It follows the original legend very closely. Renan selected St. Patrick's Purgatory to illustrate the Celtic fondness for adventure and quest. Seymour places it on the same level with the Vision of Adamnan in literary importance, and says it was one of the two best-known visions prior to the Commedia. (He would pronounce the two to be the Vision of Adamnan and St. Patrick's Purgatory.) While illustrations from many sources have been given in the present chapter to show how widely known the tale was from the twelfth century on, especially, general familiarity with the story and its setting can be summed up by recalling Shakespeare's casual reference to it in Hamlet, Act. I, Scene V.

Both Adamnan, whose vision is one of the Fis discussed in Chapter III and Owen, protagonist of St. Patrick's Purgatory observed that souls were accorded punishments adapted to their specific sins. Adamnan, Owen, and Tundal, whose vision was described in Chapter III, were shown the pains of the Otherworld for a purpose. Adamnan was to preach to men,

1. The monastery was destroyed the first time in the eleventh century by the Danes. Canons Regular of St. Augustine were then put in charge of it. Cromwellian armies destroyed it in 1632. A hospice was built at the lake late in the last century. The most remarkable relic of the mediaeval monastery is the Cross of St. Patrick. O'Connor, op. cit., P. 157

utilizing his experience to the end that he might endeavor to persuade them to righteousness. Owen and Tundal were to be converted to a better way of life. Dante's purpose in the Commedia is a similar. one. The words of Beatrice illustrate this:

> Tanto giù cadde, che tutti argomenti
> alla salute sua eran già corti
> fuor che mostrargli le perdute genti.
> Purg. XXX, 136-138

The Temple Notes include an explanation of Dante's Purgatiorio, that fits St. Patrick's Purgatory, also. Man, by his fall, lost his right to the Earthly Paradise, and must climb back to it again before striving for the Celestial Heaven. The goal of Purgatory, then, is the Garden of Eden, seen at the top of the mountain[1] by Dante and by Owen, and which both worked to attain, Dante in his poem, Owen when he emerged from the cave. Vossler,[2] indicating how the three parts of the Commedia reflect Dante's life, speaks of Purgatorio as a "sober study". Certainly it is that for Owen, who, as a result of his study of the penance due to sin, led an exemplary life thereafter.

Pope Gregory the Great was the first to elaborate on

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1. Purgatorio is in the shape of an island mountain because when God hurled Lucifer out of Heaven the infernal regions opened to receive him and the mass of matter thrown up by his bulk made the excrescence that became the mountain of Purgatory. It was composed of the ingredients of Hell, so was a fitting place for man to be cleansed.

> Da questa parte cadde giù dal cielo;
> e la terra, che pria di qua si sporse,
> per paura di lui fe'del mar velo,
>
> e venne all'emisperio nostro; e forse
> per fuggir lui lasciò qui il loco voto
> quella che appar di qua, e su ricorse.
> Inf.XXXIV, 121-126.

2. Vossler, op.cit., P. 204, Vol. II

a specific doctrine of Purgatory. It was a fire for venial sins, he said, and permitted if in life the soul deserved such a favor. The object of St. Patrick's Purgatory was very like that of Dante's Purgatorio, one of cleansing the soul in preparation for Paradise, of turning its vision from the things that are Caesar's to those of God.[1] Like Virgil who claimed he went to the lower regions in the flesh and like Dante whose substantial shade frightened the inhabitants of Purgatorio, he tells about it in the following verse,

> L'anime che si fur di me accorte,
> per lo spirare, ch'io era ancor vivo,
> marivigliano diventaro smorte
> Purg. II, 67-69.

Owen also saw the punishment due to sin while he was yet clothed with his earthly raiment.

Henry of Saltrey heard Owen's account of his pilgrimage and wrote it down in 1185. "The Lord brought St. Patrick into a desert place and there showed him a round cave, dark within," Henry began. Its reputation spread over Europe, to take its place with such other well-known Celtic legends as the Vision of Tundal, and St. Brendan's Voyage. It was referred to in mediaeval literature, usually, as the Adventures of the Knight. When Giraldus Cambrensis prepared to include the tale in his history of Ireland he consulted Henry of Saltrey's version.[2]

It was supposed to take twenty-four hours for a mortal to journey through St. Patrick's Purgatory. He fasted all this time.[3] When Oisin was asked to make the pilgrimage

1. It was like the rivers especially, namely Lethe and Eunoë.
2. Cf. P. 66, infra.
3. Pilgrims had one meal the day before their entrance into the cave, consisting of oaten bread and lake water. O'Connor, op. cit., P. 7.

he answered the invitation with, "I will not go with you to Lough Derrig.(sic) There is nothing there for food but bread and water and that would ill suit an old gray man like me."[1] Many persons were alleged to have been unable to endure the Purgatory and to have lost their reason. They were individuals whom demons possessed too irrevocably to effect salvation[2] or whose will power was not sufficiently strengthened by Divine Grace to enable them to persevere in their desire for eternal bliss, however painful the journey toward it might prove to be. Others turned back supinely, and surrendered the efficacy of the Via Dolorosa. Those who made the pilgrimage successfully were often rewarded by visions of the Otherworld, and spent the rest of their lives in a holy manner, as tradition says Owen did. A certificate was given to the individual to prove he had gone through the Purgatory.

Concerning what actually occurred on the island that was alleged to be a Purgatory on earth, there are several hypotheses. O'Connor thinks the "bridge" Owen went over was really a bridge from the island where the cave was to the island where the monastery was.[3] Owen had been fasting a long time and was in an excitable condition and it was an age when people credited tales of the supernatural; so he may have let his imagination get beyond restraint. The Earthly Paradise was probably the life the knight saw going on in the

1.Simpson, op. cit., "Conversion of Oisin", P. 196.
2.Cf. Caesarius: excerpt from the Dialogus Miraculorum, P. 65. infra.
3. O'Connor, P. 7, op.cit.

monastery, O'Connor thinks. The clean, bright, fragrant, music-emitting aspects of life in the cloister assumed a semi-celestial atmosphere for hungry, over-wrought, tired Owen.

Details of Knight Owen's Journey through St. Patrick's Purgatory

In 1153, Henry II sent one of his deputies, Gilbert, to Lough Derg, to found a new monastery there on the site of the one razed by the Danes a century earlier.[1] Gilbert did not understand Gaelic and could make little headway in Ireland in the twelfth century without doing so, so the king sent Chevalier Owen[2] who was of Irish parentage to accompany him. Legend says that Owen was leading a wicked life, but that when he reached Derg he was moved to repentance. He prayed for fifteen days, blessed himself with holy water, then recommending himself to God and to the monks who accompanied him to the entrance of the cave, he began his journey to the Otherworld.

> After he had walked a long time through darkness, Knight Owen came to a court enclosed with columns-There fifteen holy men from the adjoining monastery came to meet him, and the leader, praying, marched ahead, exhorting Owen not to let himself be tempted by demons-A host of devils in the form of hideous black birds shrieked at him as soon as he approached the entrance of Purgatory proper, but he was able to dispel them-The first thing Owen noticed after that was the bad smell that filled the air-It came from choking smoke that came in turn from roaring fires under a narrow, very slippery bridge over which Owen's way led-He was able to negotiate the bridge successfully, and avoid the horrible chasm below because he murmured the name of Christ-3.-Owen was still alone in darkness when a violent wind blew upon him-Finally a level place appeared before him where he saw souls in four different varieties of torture-4.-In one he saw people lying on the ground

1. For Henry's jurisdiction over Ireland, cf. P. 67 infra.
2. Owen was a knight in King Stephen's army, previously.
3. In Wright's version of the tale, Owen falls off the bridge. Wright, Thomas, St. Patrick's Purgatory. New York, New World Press, 1843.
4. The number "four" applied to punishments in Hell is found in Adamnan, and Laicren, Ch; III, Ui Corra, Ch. II, infra.

amidst red-hot stones, chewing the earth with rage-In another, men lay on their backs while dragons seated on their chests gnawed them open with teeth of fire, and fiery serpents put their fangs into the hearts of each-When souls managed to survive these torments, great vultures flew down and tore at them-In another level place Owen saw souls trudging along under a storm of mud mixed with everlasting ice-In the fourth plain, souls were fastened to the earth with nails so numerous that there was not a spot of bare flesh on them-1.-Knight Owen saw a fiery wheel with souls on it that turned so quickly that one saw only a flaming circle-In great large frying pans (colossal, the translator says)-2.-demons roasted souls with metal forks-There was a bath-house filled with sulphur and red-hot metal, through which souls had to go-He saw souls suspended by their ankles from fiery chains-There was a ladder with razor-like rungs-Worms and a lake of foul water were other torments suffered-

Among those in the first level that Owen came to were women being punished for their vanity, for "painting and trimming their faces"-The souls who were being gnawed by serpents in the second division Owen came to were those guilty of swearing-The souls who were marching along in the foul storm were being punished for gluttony and drunkenness-The individuals who were nailed down with fiery nails all over them were those who had dishonored their parents-3.-

Now Owen left the valley of the damned, and saw far off beyond a river and a bridge the ineffable delights of the Celestial Paradise-From where he stood, he was especially impressed with a radiantly overpowering light that shone at the top of a very high mountain up which a procession was winding-He was prevented from going any farther and was conducted to the gate which was made of beautifully colored precious stones-The monk who escorted him outside told Owen that the light emerging from Paradise was heavenly food which nourished the people who had attained blessedness.

Owen emerged from the gate purified from his sins. The monks gave him a written statement to prove he had gone through the Purgatory.

St. Patrick's Purgatory had an interesting history. It illustrates how Irish clerics made use of pre-Christian ma-

1. Marie de France, L'espurgatoire Seint Patriz. T. A.Jenkins, Philadelphia, Ferris, 1894.
2. Ibid
3. Cf. Aristophanes, The Frogs. P. 35, infra.

terials. In the days of Druidism a cave in Lough Derg was said to have evil powers. It was in a remote part of Donegal, on an island in the lake that was claimed to be Finn McCool's lake. The region was held by an old hag who was overcome by Finn. Her son, a giant, carried her body far away to a mountain. By the time he reached the mountain not much was left of her body, so he threw it away. Later a red-headed dwarf appeared and told Oisin, Finn's son, to beware of the hag's bones, that a worm was in the thigh, and if it could get out, it would look for water. Oisin broke off the thigh, let out the worm and threw it into a lake, where the worm became a monster and emerging ate hordes.[1.]

One day Finn met an old man cooking a salmon.[2.] The old man told Finn not to eat of the fish. However, Finn, while helping the old man cook the salmon, burned his finger, and to cool it, put it in his mouth. This was how Finn received the gift of knowledge. He knew, in his recently gained wisdom that the monster who was destroying so much of the population had a weak spot, a mole. Finn fought the monster, overcame him by wounding him on the mole, and threw him into the lake which turned red and was thereafter known as Lough Derg.[3.]

Druid priests used a partitioned stone cave on an island in the lake,[4.] for worshipping ceremonies. The larger room of the cave was 9x3x4', the smaller was 3x3x4'. Popular tradition states that as St. Patrick preached to the

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1. Wright, op. cit., Ch. III.
2. Salmon symbolize wisdom in Celtic lore. There are no salmon in Derg now. St. Patrick banished them.
3. O'Connor repudiates the legend. O'Connor, op. cit.
4. The lake is six miles long and four miles wide with a circumference of thirteen miles.

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people of Heaven and Hell they grew impatient, unbelieving and finally scoffing, and refused to listen to him any longer unless he gave them proof that what he preached about punishment for sin was true, and in addition gave them an actual glimpse of the damned. St. Patrick was confused about how he would proceed to obtain proof of the justice of God toward sinners, when God appeared to him and pointed out the place of the cave in Lough Derg, and instructed him to build a monastery near it. St. Patrick went into the cave, and stayed there fasting and praying for forty days. He was granted a vision of the pains of Purgatory. Awed, he ordered that the island be made a terrestrial Purgatory. The mountains around Derg and the sea close by, together with its sequestered location and the wild winds that blew around it gave it a truly eerie atmosphere. The people were impressed by the saint's fortitude when he recounted what he had witnessed, and yielded to his doctrines. Thereby the "last stronghold of the powers of gloom and evil in Ireland" was overcome. Henceforward it became a renowned pilgrimage spot, and the monastery on an adjacent island flourished.

DeVoragine wrote of St. Patrick, "Patrick is as much as to say as (sic) knowledge for by the will of God he knew many of the secrets of Heaven and the joys there, and also he saw a part of the pains of Hell" Further on DeVoragine added, "Purgatory was one of the three great things St. Patrick did."[1] (The banishment of snakes from Ireland and a prophecy he made were the others.)

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1. DeVoragine, Jacobo, op. cit., Vol. III, P. 76.

O'Connor's[1] explanation for the fantastic phenomena pilgrims claimed they saw on St. Patrick's Purgatory was given on Page 71 of the present chapter. Wright[2] has another interpretation, namely that pilgrims exhausted and excited by praying and fasting, kept vigil at a very small aperture leading from the cave underground, and through suggestibility imagined they saw tortures and a glimpse of Paradise. This is entirely opposed to most accounts of the legend.

General Parallels between St. Patrick's Purgatory and The Divine Comedy.

Emerging from Hell, Dante speaks of the entrance to Purgatorio as cave-like. Labitte, in justifying his assertion that Dante knew the legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory,[3] points out, "L'enfer a, dans ce roman, la forme concentrique qu'il a reçue de Dante."[4] Dante writes of the hollow entrance to Purgatory:

> Luogo è laggiù da Belzebù remoto
> tanto, quando la tomba si distende,
> che non per vista, ma per suono è noto
>
> d'un ruscelletto, che quivi discende
> per la buca d'un sasso, ch'egli ha roso
> col corso ch'egli avvolge e poco pende.
> Inf. XXXIV, 127-132.

The purpose of the Purgatory at Derg and Dante's Purgatorio are much alike, that is, to convert individuals to a more holy life, after cleansing them from the sins of their past lives.[5] The punishments observed are of a calibre similar to

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1. O'Connor, ibid.
2. Wright, note in his edition of the Topographica Hiberniae, of Giraldus Cambrensis, Ch. V.
3. Labitte, op. cit. P. 128. (Quoted on P. 63, infra)
4. Ibid.
5. Caesarius stressed this point. Cf. P. 65, infra. Ariosto, P. 67, and Cambrensis, P. 66, (both infra) did, also.

those Dante describes in Inferno. (Specific instances of parallels follow in the next section of the chapter.) As in Imrama and Fis punishments are adapted to the particular sins of the individuals concerned. Transgressions punishable in the Celtic Purgatory and in that of Dante are of a "venial" type. The Earthly Paradise of intense radiance at the top of a mountain, and the sight of a procession winding up the mountain are likewise found in St. Patrick's Purgatory and in the Purgatorio of The Divine Comedy.

Specific Parallels between St. Patrick's Purgatory and The Divine Comedy.

Protagonist of the journey leading a wicked life Cf. Owen	Per ch'io a lui: "Se tú riduci a mente qual fosti meco e quale io teco fui, ancor fia grave il memorar presente. Purg. XXIII, 115-117.
Shape of Purgatory Cf. Derg	Questa isoletta intorno ad imo ad imo, laggiù, colà dove la batte l'onda, Purg. I, 100, 101.
Long cheerless walk before entering Purgatory proper 1.	Noi andavam per lo solingo piano, Purg. I, 118
Angry demons pushing at the entrance	Io vidi più di mille in sulle porte ..... che ciascun dentro a pruova si ricorse. Inf. VIII, 82; 114.
Darkness in the lower regions	Oscura, profonda era, e nebulosa, tanto che, per ficcar lo viso al fondo, io non vi discernea alcuna cosa. Inf. IV, 10-12
Blackness of demons	e vidi dietro a noi un diavol nero .....Inf..XXI,.29.

1. Parallels, undesignated, refer to Owen.

Evil smell in the lower regions

pute la terra che questo riceve.
Inf. VI, 12.

Questa palude, che il gran puzzo spira,
Inf. IX, 31.

e quivi per l'orribile soperchio
del puzzo, che il profondo abisso
fitta,
Inf. XI, 4,5.

Fierceness of devils

Ahi quanti egli era nell'aspetto fiero!
Inf. XXI, 31.

Smoke in Purgatory

.....un fummo farsi
verso di noi, come la notte oscuro,
nè da quello era loco da canarsi.

Questo ne tolse gli occhi e l'aer puro.
Purg. XV, 142-145.

Fire

Non era lunga ancor la nostra via
.....,quando io vidi un foco,
ch'emisperio di tenebre vincia.
Inf. IV, 67-69.

In su le man commesse mi protesi,
guardando il foco,.....
Purg. XXVII, 16,17.

The name of God a safeguard in danger

.....ed io temeva il foco
quinci, e quindi temea cadere in giuso.

"Summae Deus clementiae" nel seno
al grande ardore allora udii cantando,
Purg. XXV, 116,117;
121,122.

Dragons chewing souls

Gli occhi ha vermigli, e la barba
unta ed atra,
e il ventre largo, e unghiate le
mani;
graffia gli spirti, gli scuoia ed
isquatra.
Inf. VI, 16-18.

People without clothes

Nel fondo erano ignudi i peccatori;
Inf. XVIII, 25

Serpent fastening on soul

ed un serpente con sei piè si lancia
dinanzi all' uno, e tutto a lui
s'appiglia.

.....

e con gli anterior le braccia prese;
poi gli addentò.....
Inf.XXV, 50,51;53,54.

Souls lying on the ground

Elle giacean per terra tutte quante,
Inf. VI, 37.

Wind in the lower regions

La terra lagrimosa diedi vento,
Inf. III, 133.

poi per lo vento mi ristinsi retro
al duca mio,.....
Inf. XXXIV, 8,9.

già mi parea sentire alquanto vento;
Inf.XXXIII, 103.

Worms for punishments

Elle rigavan lor di sangue il volto
che mischiato di lagrime a'lor piedi
da fastidiosi vermi era ricolto.
Inf. III, 67-69.

e vidivi entro terribile stipa
di serpenti,.....
Inf. XXIV, 82,83.

Vanity of women will be punished in a part of Purgatory, Heaven is planning

nel qual sarà in pergamo interdetto
alle svocciate donne Fiorentine
l'andar mostrando con le poppe il
petto.

.. ..

Ma se le svergognate fosser certe
di quel che il ciel veloce loro
ammanna
già per urlare avrian le bocche
aperte:
Purg. XXIII, 100-103.
106-108.

Procession up the mountain

Così vid'io quella masnada fresca
lasciar lo canto, e gire in ver la
costa,
Purg. II, 130,131.

Brightness seen upon emerging from the lower regions

entrammo a ritornar nel chiaro mondo;
.....
....ch'io vidi delle cose belle
che porta il ciel, per un pertugio tondo;
Inf. XXXIV, 134;137,138.

Dolce color d'oriental zaffiro,
che s'accoglieva nel sereno aspetto
Purg. I, 13,14.

River before Earthly Paradise..in two streams, according to Dante

Lethe

ed ecco il più andar mi tolse un rio
che in ver sinistra con sue picciole onde
piegava l'erba che in sua riva uscio.
Purg. XXVIII, 25-28.

Dinanzi ad esse Eufrates e Tigri
veder mi parve uscir d'una fontana,
e quasi amici dipartirsi pigri.
....
Ma vedi Eunoè che là deriva:
.....
Io ritornai dalla santissim' onda
rifatto sì, come piante novelle
rinnovellate di novella fronda,

Eunoë

puro e disposto a salire alle stelle.
Purg. XXXIII 112-114;
127;142-145.

CHAPTER V

SPIRITUAL WRITINGS OF CELTIC AUTHORS

Incident and situation play an important part in the plot of The Divine Comedy and are skilfully interwoven, but it is not incident or situation or plot in which Dante's genius is manifested, so much as is in theme. Had he pictured only the negative aspects of Hell, the hopeful prospect of Purgatory, and the sublime certainty of Heaven, he would not have left the masterpiece that he has. It is his concern with the positive ascent of the individual soul to God, and its final blissful union with the Creator that acclaim Dante for all time.[1.] In his poem he has taken the moral scheme behind the Universe for his material and has dealt with it in that complete fashion necessary to the production of a work of art.[2.] It is the spiritual nature of the Commedia that gives it its great significance, its everlasting appeal. "Over a sea of rage and madness the spirit soared and was universally recognized and honored as spirit."[3.]

The two Celtic authors considered in this chapter, one a philosopher, and the other a theologian appear to offer valuable parallels with much of the scaffolding Dante used for his description of the soul's upward climb to Heaven. Joannes

1. Buxton, op.cit., "Virgil, Dante, Milton, Goethe were the only poets in 2000 yrs. to present a comprehensive view of the Universe in the essentials of moral life."
2. Aristotle, Poetics, Work of art must have a beginning, middle and end."
3. Colum, Padraic, "The Idea of Christ in the Gospels or God in Man" by G.Santayana, New York Herald Tribune Weekly Book Review, March 31, 1946.

Scotus Erigena and Richard of St. Victor translated and wrote works that have much in common with Dante's poem. Erigena's translation of the Celestial Hierarchy of the Pseudo Dionysius is presented in the fore part of the chapter. Richard of St. Victor's studies on contemplation are considered in the latter section.

Erigena

Joannes Scotus Erigena lived in the ninth century. (810 -877) The"Scotus" in his name indicates that he was from Ireland. "Erigena" meant that he was a "native of the island of saints". He appeared at the court of Charles the Bald in France in 847 and was appointed head of the palace school in Paris. There was a colony of Irish monks and scholars at that time in Paris Erigena says in one of his manuscripts. While there he was commissioned by Charles to translate the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius from Greek into Latin. Erigena knew Greek well and had written poems in Greek. He had the reputation of being the first Greek scholar in Europe. His contribution to the history of philosophy was his De Divisione Naturae, which has been called the "first purely philosophical argument of the Middle Ages" and by means of which Erigena has been termed "the first to present philosophy as an independent science".

Although for the purpose of the present study, it is Erigena's translation of the writings of Dionysius that is of primary interest, a short examination of his own philosophy may be pertinent. He classifies Nature under four headings: 1, The uncreated creator; 2, The created creator; 3, The created non-creating; 4, The uncreated non-creating. The first and last

headings are God, Who is the Beginning, the Middle, and the End of all things.[1] Erigena used Nature in the sense of being synonymous with God, or reality.[2] "The Being of all things is the Over-being of God." This was a Dionysian point of view, also. God is above all categories, said Erigena and Dionysius. Underlying all of Erigena's doctrine of the origin of things lies the image of a circle-radii united at the center. The center is God, and the radii at points near the center are primordial causes; radii at the circumference of the circle are phenomena. By means of the heavenly gift of Divine Grace, man is enabled to rise superior to the needs of his sensuous body, to place the demands of reason above those of bodily appetite, and from reason to ascend through contemplation to Ideas, thence by intuition to God. The Greek fathers were Erigena's favored sources. Among the Latin fathers he preferred St. Augustine. Creation to Erigena is a process of an unfolding of the Divine Nature. A return to God proceeds in an inverse order through all the steps which marked the downward course, or process of things from God. He refers to Dionysius again and again in De Divisionae Naturae. "Scotus with his keen dialectical skill and soaring speculative mind found in the Areopagite[3] a kindred spirit."[4]

Erigena's treatise on the divisions of nature bears similar traits to the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius which

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1. Erigena's divisions may be described as 1, Nature which creates and is not created; 2, Nature which is created and creates 3, Nature which is created and does not create; 4, Nature which neither creates nor is created.
2. Reality here is used in the mediaeval sense.
3. For differing names for Dionysius, see sqq.
4. Catholic Encyclopedia, Stiglmayer.

the Irish scholar translated into Latin in 858 and introduced to the world thereby, accompanied with explanatory notes. Especially in the systems of gradations is it like Dionysius. Both are strongly neo-Platonic. Erigena fell into disfavor with the Church because of his philosophical arguments which were suspected of pantheistic strains. Charles the Bald protected him from a possible charge of heresy by announcing that he could not spare the scholar from his court.

Pseudo Dionysius

The works of Dionysius appeared in the latter half of the fifth century. A tentative date given for his birth is circa 247. There was much controversy over whether he was the Dionysius, Judge of the Areopagus, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles[1] who was converted by St. Paul, and who was an early Bishop of Athens after his conversion. It has been accepted by Church Doctors, however, that the authentic Dionysius who was the author of the Celestial Hierarchy was a native of Syria and lived several hundred years after Christ. Therefore he has no connection with St. Paul or the Areopagite mentioned in the Acts. Even yet little is known about the Dionysius whose works Erigena translated, except that he was familiar with Plotinus and wrote four treatises and ten letters of a philosophical nature, all in Greek. Treatise I is entitled Divine Names[2]. Treatise II, the Celestial Hierarchy, is the

1. Acts, XVII, 34.
2. Dionysius's treatise on Divine Names was used by Dante in Paradiso, says Gardner, op. cit.

most widely known. Treatise III is named Ecclesiastical Hierarchy. Mystical Union is the name of Treatise IV. Mediaeval scholars acknowledged Dionysius, among them St. Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, St. Bonaventure, and DeVoragine. The masters of St. Victor[1] based their teaching on his works and Hugo of St. Victor wrote a long, enthusiastic commentary on Dionysius. Again in the nineteenth century the subject of the genuineness of the identity of Dionysius was argued. A certain stigma attached to his name was removed when it was decided, in a final manner that, through no fault of his own, Dionysius was confused with the earlier person of the same name.[2]

The Celestial Hierarchy of the Pseudo-Dionysius

The basic idea of the Celestial Hierarchy is its division into nine angelic choirs, divided into three choirs each, known as Triads. The first Triad consisted of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones. The second Triad had Virtues, Dominations, and Powers. The third comprised Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. Dionysius drew the names of the hierarchies from the Canonical Books of the Bible.[3] Another dominant idea in the hierarchy was that choirs, while participating in His radiance and wisdom, became less intense in their love and knowledge of God, the farther they were removed from Him, as a ray of light weakens the farther it travels from its source. Like Erigena and Plotinus, Dionysius stressed, "the Being of all things is the God".[4] His doctrine resembles the emanatistic pantheism of Plotinus in its assertion that the world is an overflow, a diffusion of divine life, a re-absorption

1. For St. Victor, see sqq.
2. There had been an imputation that Dionysius intentionally assumed the identity of the Areopagite. "Pseudo" makes him clear.
3. Parker, John, Celestial and Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Dionysius the Areopagite (sic) London, Skeffington, 1894.
4. Ibid, P. 26.

of God. The first stage of the overflow for Dionysius is spirituality and in the ascending approach it is mystical intuition. The Good descends to the creative then re-ascends to its starting point.[1] Dionysius has designated all nine groups of celestial beings by names which reveal their functions. Seraphim are fiery, ever-burning, ever-moving, in the excess of love they bear to God.[2] Cherubim have power to see light in the fullness of their knowledge and stress of wisdom. Thrones have a tendency toward higher things, so are near God. Their function is one of exaltation preeminently, in the contemplative stratum. Virtues are the militant order forming a celestial sign of the Cross. Powers exhibit unflinching manliness toward God in the display of energies within themselves, and have a vigorous role in the heavenly hierarchy. Dominations marshal celestial authority and use it benignly. The beings in the third Triad, the Principalities, Archangels, and Angels are occupied in making known to man God's instructions, conversions, communions, and union. Principalities are in charge of the construction of society. Archangels preside over the destiny of nations. Michael, for example, was entrusted with the care of the Jewish people. Angels are guardians of individuals and bear the tidings of God's bounty. The whole object of the angelic hosts is to lose themselves

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1. Cf. Erigena, Pp. 83-85, infra.
2. In his poem, "Hymn of Heavenly Love", Spenser writes of the "trinal triplicities" who wait upon God. In his "Hymn of Heavenly Beauty", the poet mentions eight of the nine choirs, although in an original order. Of the Seraphim he writes, "And those eternal burning Seraphim, Which from their faces dart out fiery light;" Spenser, Edmund, Poetical Works.

in God. The task of each one is to apprehend God in a special way and the motion of the spheres is caused by their thirst to serve Him. The Primum Mobile where the Seraphim are whirls more rapidly than any of the spheres, and by its momentum the others move. While the eyes of the guiding spirits are turned upwards, power of knowledge radiates all around and downwards.

Order is the keynote of the hierarchy. All is in divine harmony and proportion.[1] Symbols have a role in the writings of Dionysius. A chariot represents the conjoined communion of those of the same rank in a united fellowship, The wheels of the chariot signify the power of advancing energy within a straight direct way. Colors are symbolic in the following manner: white has a luminous meaning; green is full-grown; red is fiery; yellow is golden. Animals, especially the lion, fox, and horse are meaningful. Among birds, the eagle has special significance. Fire is the representation preferred by the Word of God, hence the glowing qualities of the Seraphim. who are nearest to Him. Fire gives light, is unknown in its essential nature except where showing proper energy in any matter lying near it. Fire is incorruptible, imperishable, and invisible in itself. It subdues all under it, yet is unmingled with lower matter.

All things tend to God and in Him are merged and completed, just as a circle returns unto itself. Dionysius characterizes God as the end of all created things Who draws all things to Himself by the love He inspires. Each movement of a spirit intent on God is guided by an angel, and is ever directed upwards. Concerning the ascent of the mind to God,

1. The feeling that impresses the reader of Dante's Paradiso.

Dionysius says that it ascends until it reaches Paradise and is united to the Tree of Life on one hand and in the case of a parallel descent, goes down into the depths of the earth in an unfolding of the Divine Nature on the other hand. God is a formless, luminous essence. The road to Him is one of abstraction, "indolent contemplation".[1] Dionysius tells us we must die to ourselves not once but many times.[2] The influence of Plotinus on Dionysius is depicted in the soul's ascent to God. His Love is a radiant chain suspended from celestial heights. We, by stretching to it ever upwards, are thus carried on high.[3] The Sun is our nearest comparison to Divine Good, in its healing, purifying light. Even as our sun, by its very being, enlightens all things able to partake of its light, so the Good[4] sends unto all things that be, the rays of its entire goodness, according to their capacity for them. They are purified from corruption and death and separated from instability. At the top of the ladder[5] the contemplative, as one rapt and divinely inspired, abides with quietude in a motionless condition, stability itself. The line to God is circular, straight, then spiral. At the moment of Vision, the soul rests. It has fled up away from evil, purgation, revelation, contemplation, and has reached its journey's end in the Celestial Presence. The three ways of inner life, the purgative, illuminative, and unitive are mirrored in the

1. Inge, W.R., Christian Mysticism, London, Methuen, 1899, P.103.
2. Cf. Richard of St. Victor, sqq.
3. Cf. Dante on Dionysius's upward journey of the soul idea in "Specific Parallels" section sqq.
4. An example of Dionysius's use of formal names for God. From his Treatise, Divine Names.
5. Von Hugel, Frederick, Mystical Element of Religion, Vol.II, London, Dent, 1923. Pp. 90-101.

three degrees and kinds of prayer,-meditation, contemplation, rapture. The three classes of angelic choirs, the three orders of Christian ministrants, the three classes of Christian people[1], the thrice three groups of Sacraments, emphasize the notion of three or Triads.

Dionysius described the contemplative life as that most precious to God. It is the highest form of prayer, the most rarefied act of worship possible. Dionysian contemplation and the ecstasy of Union with God are much like the transcendentalism of the Neo-Platonists.[2] To Plotinus God was pure thought, the source of all beauty, and to contemplate Him was life itself, reached only after purgation and illumination. Souls reaching a state of contemplation were supremely happy, ready for the rapture of union with God that is the culminating point of the soul's flight to its heavenly home. Man contemplating is in the realm of the Sublime.

Dante has planned Paradiso much like the above. After the soul's purgation (Purgatorio and the first three spheres of Paradiso) it is ready for the illumination that is provided in the planet Sun, and rises from there to the contemplation that Dante describes objectively in the person of Benedict. Beatrice does not smile here, nor is the harmony of the spheres any longer heard, so mystical and sanctified is the love of the contemplative souls for God.

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1. From the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Dionysius.
2. Dionysius differed from Plotinus in his individualistic theology founded on Grace.

Ivi é perfetta, matura ed intera
ciascuna disianza; in quella sola
é ogni parte lá dove sempr' era,
Par. XXII, 64-66.

It is from the sphere of contemplation that Dante looks back on the world for he is on the threshold of the "ultima salute". When Dante reached the Divine Presence, all sensuous power left him and he was overcome. His experience was beyond retelling,he says in Paradiso, Canto I in the following words,

.....e vidi cose che ridire
né sa né puó qual di lassú discende;
Par. I, 5, 6.

Dante writes of Dionysius to Can Grande and describes the "celestial hierarchy as upward-looking".[1] He places him on the planet Sun in Paradiso with the great teachers and theologians of the Church.

Appresso vedi il lume di quel cero
che, giuso in carne, piú addentro vide
l'angelica natura e il ministero.
Par. X, 115-117.

In the Primum Mobile Dante speaks of Dionysius again.

E Dionisio con tanto disio
a contemplar questi ordini si mise,
che li nomó e distinse com'io.
Par. XXVIII, 130-132.

D'Ancona says of Dionysius in relation to Dante, "S. Dionigi determina il numero e la gerarchia della schiera degli angeli."[2] Certainly there are close parallels between Erigena's translation of the Dionysian works and Dante's scheme of Paradiso. The soul, purified in Purgatory, is still reaching upward through the nine spheres of Heaven until it comes to the Empyrean. Light penetrates down and is weaker the farther it is from its Source. The orders of angels in Paradiso

1. Latham, C.,Dante's Eleven Letters, New York, Houghton, Mifflin, 1891, P. 205.
2. D'Ancona, op. cit., P. 23.

are like those described by Dionysius. Dante has interpreted the function of each choir of angels according to Dionysius, also. He peoples each planet with persons appropriate to the division of angelic beings who are its wardens. The virtue or lack of virtue connected with each sphere is likewise drawn from the particular order governing it. Each sphere radiates light to the one below it, in the manner of "a Vital Principle" manifesting itself diversely in the several members of the body as joy beams through the pupil of the eye.[1]

Dante begins his journey through Paradiso on the sphere nearest earth, namely the Moon. Piccarda, forced to leave the cloister to marry is the example of one whose will in keeping vows needs strengthening.[2] Inconstancy is the lack of virtue on the Moon.[3] St. Clara, the loyal friend of St. Francis of Assisi, is taken as a model of what the opposite of inconstancy should be. Angels preside over the Moon.

Ambition and honor-seeking are the defects on Mercury where Beatrice and Dante go next. In Paradiso the faults are purified into justice. The Creation, Incarnation, and Redemption are cited as instances of God's justice. Justinian, Augustus, and Charlemagne are among the just residents of the planet. They governed judiciously.[4] Archangels are the

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1. Temple Notes. Par. II, Argument.
2. After Piccarda's husband died, she might have kept her vows, Dante thinks. When the poet asks her if she and her fellow inhabitants on the Moon are unhappy because they are so far from God, she answers in that lovely line, "e la sua volontate è nostra pace". Par. III, 85.
3. Light travels so far from God to the Moon that it flickers, so is inconstant.
4. The story of Romeo, on Mercury, is illustrative of one who suffers the defect of honor-seeking. He served his king well but left the Court when envious nobles cast aspersions on his stewardship. Par. VI, 127-142.

heavenly beings in charge of Mercury.

On Venus the weakness to be overcome is amorousness, and is now, through Heavenly influence, transmuted into purified love. Principalities minister to the sphere. Dante praises the troubadour, Folco, in Canto IX, when he is describing those who have effected a more sublime amorousness.

Sun is the next planet on the way to God. Prudence is the predominating virtue here. The planet generates energy, and the persons therein have great endowments of intellect. Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, Solomon, Dionysius, Bede, Richard of St. Victor,[1] Francis of Assisi and Dominic are here. The angelic Powers watch over the Sun.

Mars is the sphere of the courageous. Uberti[2] is one of those here, as is Can Grande.[3] Virtues rule over Mars.

Jupiter is the planet wherein are found the just.[4] Good kings of Christendom are here represented by the Imperial eagle. David and Constantine are among those on Jupiter. Dominations are entrusted with the planet.

Saturn is the planet of the contemplative region. Peter Damian and Benedict are here where all is quiet, calm, radiant. It is a very beautiful sphere, much like the descriptions in Dionysius. Thrones have the planet in their care.

The stellar heaven is beyond Saturn. Here are the Apostles, symbolized by lilies, and Mary, the Virgin Rose whom Gabriel crowned and who then rose into the Celestial Rose. Christ withdraws to the Empyrean because Dante's eyes are

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1. For Richard of St. Victor see the next part of the chapter.
2. Ancestor of Fazio degli Uberti. Cf. P. 65 infra.
3. Patron of Dante, to whom he addressed his Epistola X
4. Morally just, distinguished from the legally just on Mercury. Dante believed in strong government.

too weak to look upon Him, and the angels circle after Him. Cherubim are the angelic beings whose charge is the heaven of the fixed stars.

Having traversed the spheres described above Dante has now reached the Empyrean, where Light and Love are joined. God is at the center. The splendid Golden Rose of the Church Triumphant is here. St. Bernard guides Dante to the last station on his upward journey from the "dark forest" of the Inferno. The Seraphim are closest to God.

General Parallels between the Celestial Hierarchy of Dionysius Translated by Erigena and The Divine Comedy.

The most significant parallel lies in the arrangement of heavenly choirs in Paradiso. The upward journey of the soul is much like Dionysius. Dante stresses the ever-present beauty of light throughout Paradiso, travelling downward from the Living Light that is God to the shadowy light of the Moon.[1] The high place given contemplation is similar to the writings of Dionysius, who placed so much emphasis on the contemplative state. Paradiso is unified by Love for God, as is the Celestial Hierarchy described by Dionysius.

1. Cf. P. 92, infra, and N. 3. Bosanquet believes that the aesthetic effect of Dante's poem is from the poet's idea that Art stems from Sight, since the latter is most closely connected with the intellect. "Remarkable is Dante's love and perception of light". Bosanquet, Bernard, History of Aesthetic, New York, Macmillan, 1934, P. 159.

Specific Parallels between the Celestial Hierarchy of Dionysius, Translated by Erigena and the Commedia

Upward journey of the soul

Questi ordini di su tutti remirano,
Par. XXVIII, 127.

ciascun di quei candori in su si stese
con la sua fiamma,.....
Par. XXIII, 124,125.

Noi sem levati al settimo splendore,
Par. XXI, 13.

.....Amor che il ciel governi,
tu il sai, che col tuo lume mi levasti.
Par. I, 74,75.

Downward unfolding of celestial radiance, authority

A questa voce vid'io più fiammelle
di grado in grado scendere.....
Par. XXI, 136,137

e per autorità che quinci scende,
Par. XXVI, 26.

e di giù vincon sì che verso Dio
tutti tirati sono e tutti tirano.
Par. XXVIII, 128,129.

Diffusion, transmission from God, of Light and His Presence

La gloria di colui che tutto move
per l'universo penetra, e risplende
in una parte più, e meno altrove.
Par. I, 1-3.

e quello avea la fiamma più sincera,
cui men distava la favilla pura;
Par. XXVIII, 37, 38.

Ma tutti fanno bello il primo giro,
e differentemente han dolce vita,
per sentir più e men l'eterno spiro.
Par. IV, 34-36.

Quest'è il principio, quest'è la favilla
che si dilata in fiamma poi vivace,
e, come stella in cielo, in me scintilla.
Par. XXIV, 145-147.

Tree of Life

...."In questa quinta soglia
dell'arbore, che vive delle cima
e frutta sempre e mai non perde foglia,
Par. XVIII, 28-30.

venir vedra'mi al tuo diletto legno,
e coronarmi allor di quelle foglie,
che la materia e tu mi farai degno.
Par. I, 25-27.

Order in Heaven

tu vederai mirabil conseguenza,
di maggio a più e di minore a meno,
in ciascun cielo, a sua intelligenza.
Par. XXVIII, 76-78.

.....Le cose tutte e quante
hann'ordine tra loro; e questo è
forma
che l'universo a Dio fa simigliante.
Par. I, 103-105.

E come cerchi in tempra d'oriuoli
si giran sì che il primo, a chi pon
mente,
quieto pare, e l'ultimo che voli,
Par. XXIV, 13-15.

Nell'ordine ch'io dico sono accline
tutte nature, per diverse sorti,
più al principio loro e men vicine;
Par. I, 109-111.

Circular scheme of Paradise

....., lasciando il giro
pria cominciato in gli alti Serafini.
Par. VIII, 26,27.

Harmony in Paradise

Quando la rota, che tu sempiterni
desiderato, a sè mi face atteso
con l'armonia che temperi e discerni,
Par. I, 76-78.

Longing for God

La novità del suono e il grande lume
di lor cagion m'accesero un disio
mai non sentito di cotanto acume.
Par. I, 82,83.

Constantly increasing goodness

E Beatrice quella che sì scorge
di bene in meglio, sì subitamente
che l'atto suo per tempo non si sporge.
Par. X, 37-39.

Increase of love the higher the soul ascends

né più amor mi fece esser più presta,
chè più e tanto amor quinci su ferve,
sì come il fiammeggiar ti manifesta;
Par. XXI, 67-69.

Luminousness of God

.....l'infiammato giro
si quietò con esso il dolce mischio,
che si facea del suon del trino spiro,
Par. XXV, 130-133.

Value of the contemplative orders

Questi altri fochi tutti contemplanti
uomini furo, accesi di quel caldo
che fa nascere i fiori e i frutti
santi.
Par. XXII, 46-48.

Love and will working together

ma l'alta carità che ci fa serve
pronte al consiglio che il mondo
governa,
Par. XXI, 70-72.

Soul striving after love that is inherent in it

Ciascun confusamente un bene apprende,
nel qual si queti l'animo e disira:
per che di giugner lui ciascun
contende.
Purg. XXVII, 127-129.

God the Center of all

E questo cielo non ha altro dove
che la mente divina, in che s'accende
l'amor che il volge e la virtù ch'ei
piove.
Par. XXVII, 109-111.

un punto vidi che raggiava lume
acuto sì che il viso, ch'egli affoca,
chiuder conviensi, per lo forte
acume;
Par. XXVIII, 16-18.

Nine orders of angels

distante intorno al punto un cerchio
d'igne
si girava sì ratto, ch'avria vinto
quel moto che più tosto il mondo
cigne;

e questo era d'un altro circuncinto,
e quel dal terzo, e il terzo poi
dal quarto,
dal quinto il quarto, e poi dal sesto
il quinto.

Sopra seguiva il settimo, si sparto
già di larghezza, che il messo di Juno
intero a contenerlo sarebbe arto.

Così l'ottavo e il nono; e ciascheduno
più tardo si movea, secondo ch'era
in numero distante più dall'uno;
Par. XXVIII, 25-36

Orders named

Seraphim

Dunque costui, che tutto quanto rape
l'altro universo seco, corrisponde
al cerchio che più ama e che più sape.
Par. XXVIII, 70-73.

Cherubim

.....I cerchi primi
t'hanno mostrati i Serafi e i Cherubi.
Par. XXVIII, 98,99.

Thrones

Su sono specchi, voi dicete Troni,
onde rifulge a noi Dio guidicante
sì che questi parlar ne paion buoni
Par. IX, 61-63.

Principalities

Noi ci volgiam coi Principi celesti
d'un giro
.....
Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete;
Par. VIII, 34,35;37.

Part of Heaven a straight line

vid'io uno scaleo eretto in suso
Par. XXI, 29.

Light and Love united

Luce ed amor d'un cerchio lui comprende,
Par. XXVII, 112.

God as Over-being

ché la luca divina è penetrante
per l'universo, secondo ch'è degno
sì che nulla le puote essere ostante.
Par. XXXI, 22-24.

Emphasis on Triads, Threes

O trina luce, che in unica stella
Par. XXXI, 28.

Nella profonda e chiara sussistenza
dell'alto lume parvemi tre giri
di tre colori e d'una continenza;
Par. XXXIII, 115-117.

tre volte cinse me, si com'io tacqui,
Par. XXIV, 152.

Symbolic color

Seraphim

L'altra letizia che m'era già nota
preclara cosa, mi si fece in vista
qual fin balascio in che lo sol
percota.
Par. IX, 67-69.

Faith

Tre donne in giro, dalla destra rota,
venian danzando: l'una tanto rossa
Purg. XXIX, 121,122.

Hope

l'altr'era come se le carni e l'ossa
fossero state di smeraldo fatte;
Purg. XXIX, 124,125.

Charity

la terza parea neve testé mossa;
Purg. XXIX, 126.

Use of weapons as symbols

cen porta la virtù di quella corda,
che ciò che scocca drizza in segno
lieto.
Par. I, 125,126.

E 'l buon maestro: "Questo cinghio
sferza
la colpa dell'invidia, e però sono
tratte da amor le corde della ferza.

Lo fren vuol esser del contrario suono;
Purg. XIII, 37-40.

Chariot a symbol

Lo spazio dentro a lor quattro contenne
un carro, in su due rote,
Purg. XXIX, 106,107.

Animals as symbols

.....infin che il Veltro
verrà,
Inf. I, 101,102.

ma non sì, che paura non mi desse
la vista, che m'apparve, d'un leone.
Inf. I, 44,45.

ed una lupa, che di tutte brame
sembiava carca nella sua magrezza,
Inf. I, 49,50.

una lonza leggiera e presta molto
che di pel maculato era coperta.
Inf. I, 32,33.

Eagle as a symbol

quel mormorar dell'aquila salissi
su per lo collo, come fosse bugio.
Par. XX, 26,27.

Fire a symbol of love

Poi come il foco movesi in altura
per la sua forma, ch'è nata a salire
.....
così l'animo preso entra in disire,
ch'è moto spiritale, e mai non posa
fin che la cosa amata il fa gioire.
Purg. 28,29;31-33.

Fire a symbol of the soul

e simigliante poi alla fiammella
che segue il fuoco là 'vunque si muta,
segue allo spirto sua forma novella.
Purg. XXV, 97-99.

God, the Being of all

Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,
legato con amore in un volume,
ciò che per l'universo si squaderna;
Par. XXXIII, 85-87.

Richard of St. Victor

Richard was a slightly younger contemporary of Marcus, who translated the Visioni Tundali, and who was a friend of St. Bernard. The date of Richard's birth is unknown, but the abbey annals note his death in 1173, together with his nationality, "natione Scotum".[1] In one place in the roster a notice reads, "quem tellus genuit felici Scotica partu". Richard's career was entirely monastic. He was sub-prior of St. Victor in 1159, and prior from 1162-1173. Moreover, Richard was a disciple of Hugo of St. Victor[2] and was widely known in the Middle Ages for his studies on the inner life. During his priorship, an English abbot, Ervisius,[3] had trouble with his superiors because of a materialistic outlook, and was forced to resign his office. His poor conduct in his high ranking position brought much critical comment and one biographer[4] suggests that to escape the unpleasant turmoil Richard longed for the solace of mystical contemplation. Like Hugo, Richard was acquainted with St. Bernard, who took a lively interest in St. Victor.[5] In the history of Thomas à Becket, reference is made to Richard, indirectly. In 1166 (during Richard's priorship) John of Salisbury wrote to Thomas suggesting that a letter from such a well-known figure as the prior of St. Victor in Paris (namely Richard) might win the Bishop of Hereford[6] from the king's side to that of Thomas. Four months

1. Keating, op. cit., quotes Bede, Orosius, and Caesarius: all of whom refer to Ireland as "Scotum", and to her inhabitants as "Scots". passim.
2. For Hugo of St. Victor, and St. Victor, see sqq.
3. Gardner, op. cit., P. 164.
4. Catholic Encyclopedia
5. Gardner, op. cit., P. 144.
6. The Bishop sided with Henry II, deserting his Archbishop.

before his death, Thomas à Becket went to St. Victor's.

Richard's reputation as a theologian extended far beyond his monastery. Copies of his writings were sought throughout Europe. He scorned secular learning, when it was disassociated with the knowledge of divine things. "Sapienta insipida et doctrina indoctra", he was accustomed to say.

Abbey of St. Victor

Because there are many references in this section of the chapter to Richard's abbey, and because it was of influence on mediaeval thought and life, a description of the abbey is inserted here.

St. Victor's was a renowned place of learning in the Middle Ages. The Victorines were noted for their development of the contemplative life, and for the guidance they were able to give to a soul striving to reach God.[1] They were Augustinian canons,[2] cloistered, following a completely austere rule of life. The Abbey was founded in 1108 by William of Champeaux, arch-deacon of Notre Dame in Paris who, when he stopped lecturing,[3] retired to a small heritage dedicated to St. Victor, a soldier martyred near Paris. Many of his disciples followed him and he took up teaching again thus starting the abbey on its subsequent path to fame as an institution of learning. It was richly endowed by Popes, queens, kings, and noblemen. It had many houses, among them that of St. Geneviève of Paris. St. Victor's rapidly became a center of piety and know-

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1. Vossler, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 104.
2. These were the monks entrusted with rebuilding the monastery at Lough Derg in the XIIth century. See P. 68, n., infra.
3. Gardner suggests he was overcome by his verbal struggle with Abelard. Gardner, op. cit., P. 144.

ledge. Rabelais refers to it in the Fifth Book of Pantagruel. It has been referred to as the cradle of the University of Paris. Students from all countries attended the abbey, among them Hugo of Blankenburg who became in religion the intensely zealous and learned Hugo of St. Victor, called the St. Augustine of his time because he devoted himself to examining the forces and decisions of the will. Dante mentions Hugo in Paradiso,[1] "Ugo de san. Vittore è qui con elle", the "elle" meaning such brilliant lights of the Church as St. John Chrysostum and Anselm. Hugo was the teacher of Richard and of Peter Lombard. He was a follower of Erigena and wrote a long study on Dionysius. St. Bernard was a close friend of Hugo, through whom Richard met the great saint of Clairvaux. Hugo is remembered for his decree: "The way to ascend to God is to descend into oneself."

The Victorines were opposed to the momentum-gathering Scholasticism. Not by Aristotle's system of dialectics could men pierce God's mysteries, they taught but by the rapture of the soul in union with Him, attained through faith, knowledge and love.

In 1221 the canons of St. Victor visited Ireland and Scotland and convoked ecclesiastical dignitaries to a convention for four days. Later the abbey was involved in the Jansenist movement in France. It ended with the French Revolution. Every trace of the monastery was gone by 1800. A few convents in Bruges, Ypres, and Neuilly still keep the rule and spirit of St. Victor today.

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[1] Paradiso XII, 133.

Writings of Richard of St. Victor

"Le mysticisme de Jean Scot fut élevé à sa plus haute valeur par Richard de Saint-Victor".[1] Richard presents a good example of an illustrious pupil of an illustrious teacher. His works fall into three classes: dogmatic, mystical and exegetical. At present his mystical theology holds greatest interest. It is contained in two books on mystical contemplation: Benjamin Major and Benjamin Minor. In these he describes successive stages of contemplation. There are six, divided equally among the three powers of the soul, imagination, reason, and intelligence. The soul ascends from the visible things of creation to that rapture in which it is carried beyond itself into the Divine Presence by three steps:"mentis dilatio", or human effort;"mentis sublevatio", or human effort illuminated by Divine Grace; and"mentis alienatio", or mystical union. In its third stage, that of rapture, the soul is able to comprehend Divine mysteries of the Trinity, as in a flash. Dean Inge quotes Richard as saying, "The soul must rise to higher things on many stepping stones of many dead selves."[2] Perhaps he learned the theory from Hugo.[3]

The monks of St. Victor's were fond of an allegorical interpretation of Scripture."Benjamin" in the titles of Richard's main works refers to Psalm 47, "Benjamin in mentis excessum". Dean Inge and others see an analogy here, that "Reason dies in giving birth to Ecstasy (Contemplation) as Rachel died

1.Lenglart, Marcel, La Théorie de La Contemplation Mystique dans l'oeuvre de Richard de Saint-Victor. Paris, Library Félix Alcan, 1935. Intro.
2.Inge, op. cit., P. 115.
3.Cf. P. 103, infra.
4.Inge, op. cit., P. 142; Gardner, op. cit.; Schaff-Herzog, Religious Encyclopedia.

in giving birth to Benjamin". Richard works out the allegory to minutest details,[1] using the wives of Jacob, Rachel (Reason) and Leah (Affection) as he does so. The birth of contemplation is accompanied by the extremest pangs, yet reason, knowing that giving birth to such transcends her powers, is yet insatiable with longing. St. Thomas Aquinas also acknowledged that contemplation was difficult for humans and must be arrived at step by step. Once achieved, it is an instantaneous plunge to the heart of truth.

To illustrate the difference between meditation and contemplation Richard made further use of allegory: Joseph he used as an example of contemplation of things on a mundane level-meditation; Benjamin he cited as an example of the contemplation of things Divine-contemplation proper. "La méditation est la recherche laborieuse d'une vérité cachée. La contemplation est l'admiration heureuse de la vérité aperçue."[2] "Aperçue" refers to a spiritual sense. Richard defined contemplation in the following way, "La contemplation est une intuition perspicace et libre de l'esprit se livrant à la considération des choses." Again he varies the above definition slightly thus,"La contemplation est une libre perspicacité de l'esprit, en suspens dans la considération et l'admiration du spectacle de la sagesse."[3] Bonaventure said of Richard's

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1. Gardner, op. cit., "It was because of his Celtic imagination that Richard was so apt at allegory." P. 164.
2. Lenglart, op. cit., P. 13. (Quoting Benjamin Major, I)
3. Migne, Encyclopédie Theologique, Dictionnaire d'Ascétisme, Paris, 1865.

definitions, "On voit par là que Richard ne regarde pas la contemplation précisément comme un acte de l'intelligence, mais comme renfermant encore une affection pleine de douceur. Le mot sagesse (sapientia) vient de "sapor" (gout) comme le dit saint Bernard, et l'objet principal et premier de la sagesse est Dieu lui-même, aussi, la vérité, en tant qu'elle excite-la volonté à ce suave amour d'elle-même et constitue ainsi l'acte véritable de sagesse, consiste dans la contemplation de Dieu, non faite d'une manière ordinaire, mais accompagnée d'amour et d'une certaine douceur expérimentale. L'acte même proprement dit de la sagesse consiste donc dans la connaissance du vrai et l'amour ou le 'gout' (sapor) du bien."[1.]

With Aristotle Richard agreed that all knowledge started with the senses, "Nihil in intelletto, qui primo esse in senso". From this lowest level, knowledge or thought, the soul ascends by degrees to higher stages of intellectual knowledge, including what is most valuable to it, namely self-knowledge.[2.] To acquire self-knowledge, work, reasoning, and prayer are necessary. Knowledge of the soul leads us ultimately to the essence of God. Self-purification was more important than philosophy.[3.] Purity of heart and knowledge of self are the conditions necessary for mystical elevation, said Richard. St. Thomas had much the same opinion. "Let him that thirsts to see God clean his mirror, let him make his own spirit bright", Richard taught.[4.] He stressed the precedence of faith to reason.

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1. Migne, ibid.
2. Richard's use of the term, self-knowledge, is in its metaphysical sense, opposed to the Socratic "Know thyself".
3. This is in contrast to the Schoolmen. Cf. P. 103, infra.
4. Dante, too, uses the "mirror" metaphor frequently. The term is well treated in Male, Religious Art of the Thirteenth Century in France. Paris, 1924.

Some of Dante's most beautiful cantos in Paradiso relate to the soul in contemplation, which he, like Richard, accords a very high place.[1] Agreeing with St. Thomas on the need for a rational aspect of dogma, however, Richard in De Contemplatione contrasts the knowledge obtained by philosophy with the states of knowledge and love that are superior to reason. Describing"alienatio" as a totally separated state, Richard insisted that the human mind remembered nothing of what went on in its ecstasy, once it recovered from its exalted state. In his De Statio Interioris Hominis, Richard gives an exposition of the dignity of free will.

Dante refers to the writings of Richard in one of his letters to Can Grande,[2] "legant Ricardum de sancto Vittore in libro de Contemplatione". He puts him in the planet, Sun, in Paradiso and says of him,

> .....di Riccardo
> che a considerar fu più che viro.
> Par. X, 131.

Dante refers, evidently, to Richard's studies of exaltation.

The Florentine's love of knowledge is attested by his own prodigious learning. He seems to have taken for his province all the knowledge available in the thirteenth century. Paradiso is a process of learning much like Richard's "mentis dilatio", in that the mind is working under its own capacity.[3] Professor Dino Bigongiari of Columbia University points out that to Dante virtue is tantamount to knowledge. Dante believed in the educative process as did St. Thomas and the

1. How to reconcile Dante's deep respect for Aquinas who was a thorough Scholastic with the basic mysticism of Paradiso is a problem Gardner solves. Cf. P. 109, infra.
2. Moore, Edward, Opere di D.Alighieri, Oxford, 1897, P.419,l.55.
3. Until the planet Sun is reached where "sublevatio" occurs.

Scholastics because by education the individual became more moral in that he enjoyed greater happiness through his increased familiarity with the works of the Creation, and *noblesse oblige* proferred fitting obeisance and adulation to the Giver of all his blessings. It is the idea of *Delectasti* toward the end of *Purgatorio* which Mathilda expounds to Dante.[1] "Without joy", said Dante, "there is no virtue." A fusion of love and will make for ideal subservience to God's Word; that love and will are inimical often is because of lack of education. One can hardly credit Dante with subscribing to an exclusively secular education[2] any more than Richard did since his first object in educating the individual would be to reveal to him the Goodness and Omnipotence of God, that love for God might draw the soul along its upward ascent. Love for Him is latent in all,[3] but Grace and Will must aid knowledge in bringing it to fruition as they did in Dante himself.

Much of the spiritual skeleton of the *Commedia* parallels Richard's outline of the soul's journey to its rightful place of union with God. Virgil may be said to represent Richard's first stage of ascent, the mind expanding through its own ability. It reaches its limit and its goal in the Earthly Paradise.[4] Mathilda who conducts Dante to his heavenly guide might be "sublevatio", the mind in action illumined by Divine Grace.[5] Beatrice is also a type of aide to Dante in this

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1. *Par.* XXVIII, 79-144.
2. Dante was a student of the classics, a humanist in the mediaeval sense, but he does his best to earn pre-Christian authors a place in Paradise.
3. Cf. P. 97, parallel #5, *infra*.
4. Cf. P. 69, *infra*.
5. Cf. P. 107, n.3.

middle threshold of his pilgrimage. The light which characterizes Paradiso repeatedly, might symbolize Divine illumination. St. Bernard could be the prototype of the soul in contemplation, understanding Divine mysteries not by reason nor by revelation but by the rapture of ecstatic love. He it is who escorts Dante to the final resting place of the soul in "the love that moves the sun and stars", at the zenith of Paradiso, in which the poet's goal, the Vision of God, is attained.

General Parallels between the Writings of Richard of St. Victory and The Divine Comedy

The emphasis on mysticism is the chief general parallel observed in Richard's works and in the Paradiso of The Commedia. The rapture of the soul in union with God which Richard describes at length is the culminating point of Dante's poem. Richard points out that contemplation is a gift of God for which the soul must strive. Dante, likewise, is able to partake of the experience that the soul receives in the Presence of God only after the long horrifying journey through Hell, and through the cleansing encounters of Purgatory and the fore part of Paradise, and through the illuminatory stages of the latter part of Paradise. The Victorine's belief that knowledge of God is antecedent to love for Him is very like Dante's method of displaying the handwork of the Creator while seeking to approach Him. Gardner's words in explanation of Dante's obvious trust in mysticism fit in here, "Scholasticism is the body of Dante's religion. Mysticism is its soul. Love is the animating spirit of both."

Specific Parallels between the Writings of Richard of St. Victor and The Divine Comedy

The mind losing consciousness in "alienatio"

Qual è colui che somniando vede,
Par. XXXIII, 58.

cotal son io, chè quasi tutta cessa
mia visione,
Par. XXXIII, 61,62.

Così la neve al sol si disigilla
cosi al vento nelle foglie lievi
si perdea la sentenza di Sibilla.
Par. XXXIII, 64-66.

Così la mente mia, tutta sospesa,
mirava fissa, immobile ed attenta,
e sempre del mirar faceasi accesa.
Par. XXXIII, 97-99.

The soul dying to itself on its upward ascent

Quale è colui ch'adocchia, e s'argomenta
di vedere eclissar lo sole un poco,
che per veder non vedente diventa;
Par. XXV, 118-120.

Ahi quanto nella mente mi commossi,
quando mi volsi per veder Beatrice,
per non poter vedere, ben ch'io fossi

presso di lei, e nel mondo felice!
Par. XXV, 136-139.

Faith a gift of Grace

.....La larga ploia
dello Spirito Santo, ch'è diffusa
in sulle vecchie e in sulle nuove
cuoia,

è sillogismo, che la m'ha conchiusa
acutamente sì che in verso d'ella
ogni dimostrazion me pare ottusa.
Par. XXIV, 91-96.

Faith preceding reason ("virtù") 1.

.....Questa cara gioia,
sopra la quale ogni virtù si fonda,
Par. XXIV, 89,90.

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1. "virtù" is used in its older sense, namely knowledge.

Illumination needed for understanding

.....Le profonde cose
che mi largiscon qui la lor parvenza,
agli occhi di laggiù son sì ascose,
Par. XXIV, 70-74.

Contemplation a means to rapture and supreme peace

tale era io mirando la vivace
carità di colui, che in questo mondo
contemplando, gustò di quella pace.
Par. XXXI, 109-111

Realm of illuminated different from that of reason alone

giunse lo spirto al suo principio cose
ch'io non intesi, sì parlò profondo:

né per elezion mi si nascose,
ma per necessità, che il suo concetto
al segno dei mortal si soprappose.
Par. XV, 38-42.

Sight purged of things of the world before Divine Vision is seen.

che la mia vista, venendo sincera
e più e più entrava per lo raggio
dell'alta luce, che da sé è vera.
Par. XXXIII, 52-54.

True knowledge coincident with Love

Quinci si può veder come si fonda
l'esser beato nell'atto che vede,
non in quel ch'ama, che poscia
seconda;
Par. XXVIII, 109-111.

Understanding of mysteries through flash of Divine Light

veder voleva, come si convenne
l'imago al cerchio, e come vi s'indova;
Par. XXXIII, 137,138.

ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne;
se non che la mia mente fu percossa
da un fulgore, in che sua voglia
venne.
Par. XXXIII, 137-141.

Need for illumination

.....poi retro ai sensi
vedi che la ragione ha corte l'ali.
Par. II, 56,57.

Union with God through Love

.....il mio disiro e il
velle,
si come rota ch'egualmente è mossa,

l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.
Par. XXXIII, 143-145.

Knowledge from senses to the intellect

Così parlar conviensi al vostro ingegno,
però che solo da sensato apprende
ciò che fa poscia d'intelletto degno.

Per questo la Scrittura condiscende
a vostra facultate, e piedi e mano
attribuisce a Dio, ed altro intende;

e santa Chiesa con aspetto umano
Gabriel e Michel vi rappresenta,
e l'altro che Tobia rifece sano.
Par. IV, 40-48.

Impotence of reason alone

Matto è chi spera che nostra ragione
possa trascorrer la infinita via,
che tiene una sustanzia in tre persone.
Purg. III, 34-36.

Freedom of the will

ché volontà, se non vuol, non s'ammorza,
ma fa come natura face in foco,
se mille volte violenza il torza.
Par. IV, 76-78.

Lo maggior don, che Dio per sua
larghezza
fesse creando, ed alla sua bontate
più conformato, e quel ch'ei più
apprezza,

fu della volontà la libertate,
di che le creature intelligenti,
e tutte e solo furo e son dotate.
Par. V, 19-24.

Faith transcending reason

.....Quanto ragion qui vede
dirti poss'io; da indi in là t'aspetta
pure a Beatrice, ch'opera è di fede.
Purg. XVIII, 46-48.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

"Dante garde le sentiment de l'antiquité sans perdre le sentiment chrétien."[1] A striking parallel gleaned through the present study, seems to lie in the fact that Celtic writings about the Hereafter likewise preserve the spirit of antiquity while zealously harboring every Christian sentiment. The Voyage of Bran with the siren incident of Homeric fame, The Voyage of Maildun with the Egyptian-like Phoenix incident, The Voyage of St. Brendan which has a whale incident that Asín claims is similar to something in the literature of Islam, serve to show how Celtic Imrama preserve the spirit of antiquity even to the apex of Christian legends, namely the Navigatio Brendani. The Vision of Adamnan, with its seemingly Chaldean-inspired Paradise, The Vision of Tundal in which occurs a proper name from the Greek lower world (Acheron), The Vision of Fursa that has the Persian-derived debate over body and soul, are examples of Celtic Fis which retain vestiges of ancient cultures in thoroughly Christian literature. St. Patrick's Purgatory, Druidic shrine as it was that was afterward sanctified for Christian use, is likewise an instance, in a slightly different way, of the manner in which the Celts kept a part of their very early civilization and ma

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1. Labitte, op. cit., P. 86.

and made it serve the new religion.

The similarity of incident and situation evidenced in the Celtic Imrama and Fis described in Chapters II and III, to the Commedia, appears to grow out of their common starting-point, namely the rich, varied world of Otherworld ideas inherited from classical literature on the one hand and made vibrant by Christianity on the other.

Several authorities bear witness to the manner in which Celtic writings are a definite emanation of classical antiquity by remarking how St. Brendan's Voyage[1] was repudiated by standard mediaeval authors who were under exclusively Roman influence. For instance, the Bollandists and Vincent of Beauvais failed to include the narrative of the "odissea monastica" in their histories. Labitte refers to its foreign flavor, "Le tour, l'imagination brillante et presque orientale qu'elle décèle."[2] It is the legend Asín quotes particularly to illustrate how Oriental eschatology permeates occidental legends.[3] He writes of it, "antes de que el poeta florentina redastase su obra maestra, existia ya en toda la Europa cristiana un caudal riquisimo de concepciones poéticas nacido por generación autóctona cristiana, sino por contagio de la litteratura excatológica del islam, puesto que algunos de esos rasgos pintorescos y mitos poéticos carecían de precedentes próximos y aun remotos en la escatología cristiana, como hijos que eran

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1. De Goëje, a Dutch orientalist, finds vestiges of Eastern lore in the Legend of St. Brendan. Qu. in Asín, P.76. (Asín, cf. P, 116.) 2. Labitte, op. cit., P. 122.
3. Asín finds that St. Brendan's Voyage resembles Islamic eschatology in several ways: St. Brendan is like Sinbad el Mariner, P.263; the debate of the body and soul, P.287; the whale incident, P.267.

de otras religiones orientales, la egipcia y la zoroastra principalmente. El islam, en estrecho contacto con estas religiones, habíaselos asimilado, y, fundidos con otras concepciones suyas, los había transmitido a la literatura cristiana occidental."[1].

Meyer notes that Celtic literature makes use of the Pythagorean doctrine which teaches that the soul exists prior to and independent of the body with which it is associated in life. The association has a penal form. Virtue in this life enables the soul to lead an incorporeal existence in the upper air. Vice leads to further imprisonment of the soul in flesh either by a rebirth in human or animal form, or in the pains of Tartarus. Life, therefore, wears a probationary aspect. Release from the chains of flesh, renewed bondage to the flesh, or damnation to hell depend on acceptance of philosophical doctrine, and conformity to ethical rules.[2].

Asín points out that Eastern culture had an elaborate system of heavenly cycles, and a well-developed theory of punishment and reward. The Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, and Hebrews bequeathed to Islam the general outline of the Christian Paradise.[3]. From the Tartarus of Grecian literature came the idea of Hell. D'Ancona[4]. notes the way in which a classical name for Hell was applied to the Christian Inferno when, in the Visioni Tundali a monster Tundal saw in Hell was named Acheron: "e qui é de notarsi giá le denominazioni

1. Asín, Palacios, D. Miguel, La Escatología Muselmana en la Divina Comedia. Madrid, 1919. P. 295.
2. Meyer, Nutt, op. cit., Vol. II, P. 114.
3. Dods, op. cit., Ch. VII. Boswell, op. cit., Ch. III.
4. D'Ancona, op. cit., P. 54.

dell'inferno classico come il che avverà poi ancor più largamente nel libro del nostro maggior poeta." Boswell sees no marked Roman influence on the Irish Church until the doctrine of a formal Purgatory (incidental in literature until then) was introduced in the tenth century. Thus research seems to support the theory that Celtic Otherworld Literature received its impetus from ancient sources.

It was noted in Chapter II[1] that Celtic writings are not obvious, always, in the meanings a reader is to get from them. That Dante also expects readers to look for hidden meanings in his Divine Comedy, he states in his letter to Can Grande[2] in which he says that his poem has a four-fold significance. It is symbolic, moral, allegorical and anagogical.

St. Brendan's Voyage illustrates how Celtic writing is symbolic. The rock on which Judas sat symbolized the deep warth of kindness in human living, and how precious it is in the eyes of God. Judas, in spite of his perversion, had within him something of what Dante describes in his line, "Ciascun confusamente un bene apprende."[3] The entire Voyage of Maildun may be interpreted as symbolic of the soul's journey toward salvation. Maildun started on his voyage with bitter, vengeful thoughts, but after many experiences (islands) he was purged of his desire for revenge, and returned home at peace with God. In The Voyage of the Sons of Ui Corra, the food that suited everyone's taste[4] is symbolic of the ideal state of

1. Ch. II, P. 25, infra.
2. Moore, loc. cit.
3. Purg. XVII, 127.
4. In Voyage of Bran, Voyage of Maildun, St. Brendan's Voyage, also.

Paradise where no one will lack for anything. Taylor emphasizes that the spirit of symbolism characterizes the entire Middle Ages[1].

St. Thomas Aquinas writes in his Summa that man's intellect of itself indicates a necessity for morality. When lecturing on Middle Irish, Professor Gunn defined literature as an expression of life's significant features, most of which are moral in nature. Celtic writings are strongly moral from the beginning. The Sick Bed of Cuchulinn, one of the forerunners of legends dealing with the Land of Promise, exemplifies how a positive system of morality entered into pre-Christian life in Ireland. Two women who love Cuchulinn strive to make the most of his illness, really mental anguish rather than physical impairment, by outdoing themselves in generosity toward him. Then they extend their generosity to one another and vie in withdrawing claim to Cuchulinn's affections. Manaanan MacLir solves the dilemma by shaking a cloak of forgetfulness between Fann and Cuchulinn. Cuchulinn then goes back to Emer, his lawful wife.

Celtic literature is highly allegorical. The stories of the Invasions, the Prim-scèla, Finnian and Ossianic poetry are all filled with dramatic episodes that actually connote something far beyond and far different from what they relate. For example, Bricru's Feast[2], one of the tales in the Red Branch cycle of stories (often referred to as an epic) shows in allegorical form, how honor and a high sense of

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1. Taylor, op. cit., Ch. 43, Vol. II
2. Bricru, known as "Poison-tongue", because of his unadmirable politics, is described as the "Thersites of the Red Branch Cycle" by Cross. op. cit.

responsibility, personified by Cuchulinn, are able to triumph over a low type of scheming politics. The voyage tales and the visions are complete allegories in themselves.[1.]

The anagogical content of Celtic literature is seen in its concern with things beyond this world. Celtic preoccupation with the Otherworld has been likened to sitting in a chair thinking of a far-off place. However, the world of thought and of figurativeness is brought back always to fact. Dante uses dreams in several places in his poem in much the same way. He ties the central idea in the dream with his thesis of the particular moment.[2.] The Middle Ages made dreams of far greater significance than we do. Hence Celtic visions of the Otherworld were readily accepted, for much that was alleged to take place in the non-physical world was plausible to mediaevalists.

The reason that mysticism flowered then is not strange. Vossler points out how St. Bernard is a prototype of the true mystic of the Middle Ages because he took a practical view of the will in that he was able to understand its positive and negative aspects and the resulting acceptance and denial of the world that such a view entailed. In him the balance was perfect, therefore the saint exemplified the "unification of man with himself".[3.] St. Malachy, whose life St. Bernard was writing when Marcus, the translator of the Vision of Tundal, stopped to see him, was a Celtic monk of like temperament. He died at Clairvaux while visiting Bernard thus adding another evidence to Zimmer's conviction that

1. Boccaccio and Croce have interesting comments on allegory in Dante. See bibliography.
2. Dreams, Dante: Purg. IX, XIX, XXVII.
3. Vossler, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 72.

it was through the activity of Irish monks that learning, particularly Greek learning, spread in Europe and led to an enriching of the stream of world culture that fed Dante.

It was noted in Chapter II when Celtic voyage tales were under discussion that it was usually at the invitation of a queen that the protagonist of the tale received his initial desire to go to the Otherworld. There is a parallel between the part Beatrice takes in Dante's poem, concerning which a whole library of books has been written, and the role of women in Celtic literature. Renan points out that salvation comes to Celtic heroes through women. He stresses the "grace operating through women" theme in Celtic poetry.[1] Early poetry in Ireland is full of allusions to the desirable gifts possessed by its women. Emer, for example, is a worthy wife for Cuchulinn because she is endowed with modest behavior, singing, sweet speech, beauty, wisdom, and skillfulness in needlework.[2] The last sentence illustrates the intensity with which Celtic authors stress ideas and illustrations of their ideas. ideas. They had small regard, to judge by their writings, for those persons whom Dante puts near the beginning of the Inferno, of whom Virgil says,

> .....Questo misero modo
> tengon l'anime triste di coloro,
> che visser senza infamia e senza lodo.
> Inf. III, 34-36.

It is difficult to think of Dante himself as anything but an intense individual.[3]

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1. Renan, loc. cit.
2. Cf. Vita Nuova, C. XXVI, 26.
3. Commenting on Dante's method of description, Macaulay writes that it is the poet's intensity of feeling that makes his similes so remarkable. Macaulay, "Milton", Milton and Addison, (Ed. Thurber), Boston, Allyn, Bacon, 1895. P. 19.

In Celtic literature the treatment of nature is highly descriptive, often dramatic, but always intrinsic in the writing. The recounting of the natural features Brendan found on the Earthly Paradise illustrate the way in which Celtic poems made use of descriptions of nature. Oisin's poetry, influenced as it is by Middle Irish legends, abounds in richly colorful metaphors drawn from Nature.[1] Dante's aesthetic treatment of Nature, interwoven with the text, is among the keen delights of the poem.[2] Monsignor Slattery's book reveals the large number of Dante scholars and students who treasure the poet's references to such natural phenomena as sunset, twilight, the stars, the moon, dawn, the sea, and flowers.

Character delineation is a strong point in Celtic Otherworld Literature. Plot may be lacking, often, or be too diffused to be effective, but the individual stands out clearly. Knight Owen in St. Patrick's Purgatory, for instance, appears as an example of an individual living the thoughtless, non-spiritual life of the ordinary rank and file person representative of mankind in general. Maildun, the sons of Ui Corra, Tundal, and Fursa, are identifiable, individually, after reading the stories in which they are characterized.[3] D'Ancona comments on Dante's method of imbuing the men and women in the Commedia with life. "Non l'uomo in generale o l'anima senza persona, ma l'uomo col suo nome, suoi costumi, le sui

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1. Cf. P. 39, infra, n. 1.
2. Slattery, John T., My Favorite Passage from Dante. Devin-Adair, New York, 1929. Passim.
3. Voyage of Maildun, Voyage of the Sons of Ui Corra, Vision of Tundal, Vision of Fursa. Ch.II, Ch.III, infra.

vicissitudini nel mondo o nella storia."[1] It is precisely because Dante presents man individually with such realism that he shows man, the whole man, in his universal aspect as an eternal being, morally rather than physically.

As Taylor points out concerning mediaeval thought in general, so Celtic literature is,-emotionalized, plastic, living. He goes on to say that the emotional traits of Celtic literature entered into the larger currents of mediaeval feeling and imagination. He cites the Tristram and Guinevere stories, particularly, as examples of his thesis.[2] Otherworld literature, too, is subjective. One becomes absorbed in the maritime experiences of Bran, Maildun, and St. Brendan, and in the envisioned happenings of Adamnan, Laicren, Tundal, and Fursa, and in the purgatorial observations recounted by Knight Owen.[3]

Taylor's reference to the Guinevere story recalls the importance of the troubadours in spreading the fame of Celtic works abroad. Toynbee has an interesting passage about Dante's acquaintance with the fabliaux of the troubadours and suggests that he may have become familiar with them while he was in Paris.[4] In his De Vulgari Eloquentia, Dante makes specific mention of the romances of the troubadours and describes them as "ambages pulcherrimae". In his poem he refers to

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1. D'Ancona, op. cit., P. 113.
2. Taylor, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 173.
3. For Bran, Maildun, Brendan, see Ch. II, infra. For Adamnan, Laicren, Tundal, Fursa, see Ch. III, infra. For Knight Owen, cf. St. Patrick's Purgatory, Ch. IV, infra.
4. Toynbee, op. cit., Ch. I, P. 10.

such well-known poets as Arnaut Daniel,[1] Folco,[2] Bertran de Born,[3] Sordello,[4] and mentions the Lancelot story in both the Inferno, when he tells the story of Francesca and Paolo,[5] and Paradiso, where he likens a motion that Beatrice makes to Guinevere.[6] Vossler suggests that the Lancelot story fed Dante's imagination, and notes that the Romance of the Rose was indirectly connected with the Commedia. Toynbee also remarks that the French story, the Romance of the Rose was included in Brunetto Latini's Trésor and Tesoretto and may have inspired Dante to use a rose as a symbol of Paradiso. Nutt affirms Marie de France's connection with Celtic literature by way of the Breton trouvères.[7] Through her St. Patrick's Purgatory and other Celtic romances went into France, where their matter and style affected the literature of the thirteenth century,[8] for not only was the "galeotto" with his often coarse repertory popular, but such troubadours as Folco knew Breton literature of a higher type and presented it before cultivated circles. The mediaeval era is a notably well-concentered epoch. From

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1. Arnaut Daniel, Purg. XXVI, 136.
2. Folco, Par. IX, 94.
3. Bertran de Born, Inf.XXVIII, 133.
4. Sordello, Purg. VI, 58.
5. Francesca and Paolo, Inf. V, 115-142. Santayana comments on this incident, calling it "love among the ruins". Santayana, G., "Dante", Three Philosophical Poets, Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press, 1922, P. 119.
6. Guinevere, Par.XVI, 15.
7. Nutt (Meyer, Nutt) op. cit., Vol. II, P. 56.
8. The romances affected "l'amour courteois", especially.
   In connection with the cycle of mediaeval romance literature in general, and its most popular figure, King Arthur, Leslie, op. cit., points out that Owen has been identified with one Evain, one of Arthur's knights. Intro.

the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, an interrelated process of thought, beliefs, and standards prevailed and imparted a spiritual color to the time. Celtic influence is strong right here, but it is an influence of nuance and shading, intangible but impressive. The voyages, the visions , and the spiritual writings of Celtic authors permeated the continent of Europe in the sphere of the ideological especially, very hard to touch upon specifically, but definitely present.

The subject of the troubadours and their varying repertories brings up the subject of humor in both Celtic Otherworld Literature and Dante. There is usually a touch of humor in Celtic tales, even in those on solemn subjects. Situations are of the type, often, that may be serious or humorous, according to the way in which the reader interprets them. The whale incident in St. Brendan's Voyage is illustrative.[1] It is interesting to read that D'Ancona feels that one of the ways in which Dante enriched the literature he inherited was by the comic note he injected into it. He quotes the dilemma of Venedico Caccianemico to illustrate his point. Dante asks Venedico,

> "ma che ti mena a sì pungenti salse?" [2]

And the condemned one replies,

> "Io fui colui, che la Ghisola bella
> condussi a far la voglia del Marchese,
> come che suoni la sconcia novella." [3]

Then comes what D'Ancona considers the comic part,[4]

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1. Cf. P. 21, Ch. II, infra.
2. Inf.XVIII, 51.
3. Inf.XVIII, 55-57.
4. Inf.XVIII, 64-67.

Così parlando il percosse un demonio
della sua scuriada, e disse: "Via,
ruffian, qui non son femmine da conio."

"Parlando a gioco" Griffolino [1] relates an incident of his life on earth. He tells a friend,

"Io mi saprei levar per l'aere a volo;"

and the other, "che avea vaghezza e senno poco," [2] made him demonstrate his ability to fly like a bird. Griffolino sums up the result,

".....,,,,,,,e solo
perch'io nol feci Dedalo, mi fece
ardere a tal, che l'avea per figliulo. [3]

Vossler professes to find two comic touches in the Commedia, both in Inferno. The chaos that occurs in Canto XXII when the demons with hooks pursue sinners, "hooking" them out of the pitch whenever they let any part of themselves remain above the burning liquid, and then, because one of the sinners managed to escape them, begin to quarrel with one another, he thinks ludicrous. [4] Canto XXXI, in which Antaeus, after Virgil describes the giant's prowess in the world (mythological) picks up Virgil and Dante and deposits them in the last circle of Hell, [5] Vossler thinks comical, too.

Yet, like the Divine Comedy, however light-hearted it may appear in parts, (or wholly, like the Vision of

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1. Inf. XXIX, 112.
2. Inf. XXIX, 114.
3. Inf. XXIX, 115-117.
4. Vossler, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 274.
5. Ibid, P. 291.

Macgonlinne, Chapter III, P. 11) Celtic literature is essentially in earnest[1] and possesses what Vossler notes in Dante, namely, an innate sense of decorum, "the most delicate fruit of moral consciousness".

Dante has set forth the whole of Catholic dogma, but not as bald dogma. He has made the teachings of religion flexible, alive, by his own personal manner of dealing with them, endowing them with living spirit, presenting them with fiery positiveness. Celtic literature is religious from first to last. It exemplifies the spirit of the Church Eternal, placing emphasis always on the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude, and on the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.[2] The religious atmosphere of Ireland was conducive to the development of a highly philosophical mentality such as Erigena's. Hull's description of Ireland in the Middle Ages is pertinent in revealing the setting for a career like his, "A place of comparative quiet amid an almost universal turmoil, Ireland became a land of retirement in which the student might fit himself for his life's work, by study and meditation, while the active, vigorous temperament of its people would not permit him to remain in luxurious repose, but pushed him forward to take a place in the outward movement in which Ireland at an early date, took a prominent part. The best work of the nation was accomplished not by isolating itself in the sense of self-conscious superiority, (the most

1. Celtic literature of the present day is sometimes erroneously interpreted as "jolly" or rollicking when it is really deeply serious. O'Casey, Joyce, for example.

2. Dante, too, seems to have thought that the Church was existent in the minds of unbelievers. Several passages in his poem lead to the idea that idolatry was an attempt to seek God, if an erring one. Cf. Par. IV, 61-63, for example.

deadening of all moods) but in adding a touch of religious fervor, artistic endeavor, intellectual impulse to the common flame in whose light nations walk."[1] It may be that the world for seven centuries has been delighted by Dante's Paradiso because Erigena took advantage of what his country provided in educational opportunities, and thereby became exceptionally proficient in Greek, went forward from Ireland as so many of his fellow scholars did, accepted an appointment at the Court of France, and agreed to the commission of translating the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius. The editors of the Temple Edition of the Divine Comedy, in an essay quoting Witté, at the end of Paradiso note, "For the appreciation of the poem little is needed in the first instance beyond a clear conception of the succession of the several heavenly bodies through which Dante ascends, and the moral and spiritual associations which they carry." It was Erigena who provided the necessary conception.

About the early training of Richard of St. Victor little is known, but since education for boys in Ireland starts when they are very young, it is reasonable to assume that some, at least, of his preparation for a learned monastic career was obtained in his native land. Vossler describes Paradiso as a poem of pure thought, pure contemplation, and Richard, the Celtic-born mystic, appears to have contributed much to Dante's knowledge of the spiritual fervor that is the atmosphere of Paradiso.

1. Hull, Eleanor, Early Christian Ireland, London, Nutt, 1905.

A number of scholars have been concerned with the problem of whether or not Dante was actually cognizant of contemporary or subsequent writings on his subject, descriptive eschatology.[1] He himself says,

> "Ma io, perche venirvi? o chi'l œncede?
> Io non Enea, io non Paolo sono;
> me degno a dió né io né altri 'l crede."
> Inf. II, 31-33.

and again,

> "e, se Dio m'ha in sua grazia richiuso
> tanto, che vuol ch'io veggia la sua corte
> per modo tutto fuor del modern' uso,"
> Purg. XVI, 40-42.

and further on,

> "L'acqua ch'io prendo giammai non si corse:"
> Par. II, 7.

By "modern'uso" above, Dante may be referring to the sizable accumulation of Otherworld literature in existence by the thirteenth century. His "Io non Enea, io non Paolo sono;" seems to be a definite reference to the tradition of vision literature that began in the classics and continued through Hebrew literature.[2] In conclusion to this portion of the chapter the opinions of some of the writers in the field of Dante sources are presented for the concurrence of decision among them.

Vossler terms The Divine Comedy an "outbreak", rather than a growth, the result of a long-hidden quietly accumulated force which suddenly released itself in the poetry of Dante. A similar process went on in Ireland where the works of educated monks and lay persons, containing what had long been

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1. Cf. Ch. I, infra, P. 5.
2. Cf. Ch. III, infra, Pp. 32-34.

in the oral tradition were popularized somewhat earlier. Coming up from antiquity, colored by the addition of Christian teaching, as were Celtic legends, The Divine Comedy was the "personal application and utilization of the accumulated wealth of the Christian heart."[1]

Boswell reiterates that the Commedia, like Celtic legends, belongs to the class of world-myths.[2] He puts his deduction aptly when he says, "The Commedia is like a mighty river formed by a confluence of several tributaries, one of which is Celtic eschatological literature, and all of which are amalgamated into gold by Dante."

A relevant passage from Labitte along the same line of thought is, "Avec le temps, avec chaque siècle, le cycle légendaire auquel appartaient La Divine Comédie s'étend et se diversifie. On le voit aussi grandir jusqu'a Dante, qui absorbe tous ces ruisseaux connue, fait un grand fleuve, sans que ses eaux, mêmes paraissent grossir et s'augmenter."[3]

Renan puts the case for Celtic literature well when he writes, "In the face of the unknown, the Celts dream of the great journey the pen of Dante has celebrated." They not only dreamed of it, they wrote down their dreams and included a large number of significant situations paralleled in the poem that "masters apocalyptic literature". The style in which Celtic authors wrote down their dreams is characterized by qualities similar to some of those found in the Italian

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1. Vossler, op. cit., Vol. I, P. 87.
2. Boswell, op. cit., Pp. 1,2.
3. Labitte, op. cit., P. 128.
4. Renan, loc. cit.

poet. Shane Leslie makes a statement from the field of comparative literature, "All preliminary visions and journeys to the Underworld are to Dante what old English histories and chronicles are to Shakespeare."[1] Walsh repeats that Celtic literature has left its impression in the non-tangible sphere, "A large portion of the inspiration absorbed by Dante in his mastery of the stream of mediaeval knowledge is Celtic."[2]

Gabrielli compares the Divine Comedy to "una vetta culminante in mezzo a un altipiano, o un promontorio serie di colli e di cima in catena a cui visibilmente esso s'attacchi e da cui in sostanza derivi."[3] The many parallels in Celtic eschatological literature and in the Commedia suggest that one of the hills in the promontory series leading to the crest that is Dante's poem may have been of matter from Ireland. At any rate, the study seems to show that in Imrama, Fis, St. Patrick's Purgatory, and the Spiritual Writings of Celtic Authors, there are many striking similarities to The Divine Comedy.

1. Leslie, op. cit., Intro., xxii.
2. Walsh, Gerald, Mediaeval Humanism. New York, Macmillan 1942.
3. Gabrielli, Dante e l'Oriente, Bologna, (Ed., Zanichelli), 1921.

CELTIC ESCHATOLOGY AND PARALLELS IN DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY

An Abstract

The dissertation is a study of those situations, incidents, and ideas occuring in Celtic Otherworld literature, parallels of which are readily apparent in The Divine Comedy. Two classes of Celtic prim-scèla are examined, namely the Imrama, or voluntary voyage tales, and the Fis, or vision legends. They are discussed in Chapters II and III of the study. Detailed descriptions of the outstanding legends in each class are included in the chapters and the main parallels found in them and in Dante are put down dichotomously at the end of each chapter. St. Patrick's Purgatory is the subject of Chapter IV. The history of the Druidic shrine used in the centuries before St. Patrick is described according to the legends that surrounded it. St. Patrick's connection with the cave on Lough Derg in Donegal is included and the reason for its extreme popularity throughout Europe in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is pointed out. John Scotus Erigena, who in the ninth century translated the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius from Greek into Latin, thus making the works of Dionysius available to mediaeval scholarship, is considered in the first section of Chapter V. Erigena's own philosophical work, De Divisione Naturae, is studied briefly to find Neo-Platonic influences in it that occur also in Dionysius, and that are paralleled in the Paradise of the Divine Comedy. The Dionysian Celestial Hierarchy is examined for its system of angelic gradations,

and the closely similar cosmography of Paradiso furnishes some of the material for the group of parallels noted at the end of Chapter V. The principal writings of Richard of St. Victor contained in his Benjamin Major are discussed because they are very like the spiritual ascent of the soul in Paradise, culminating in the rapture of Divine Union.

Translations of Celtic legends by reputable scholars in the field of vision literature were used. The Italian text of the Divine Comedy was used.

The investigation is concerned with parallels alone, those gleaned from literal translations of early manuscripts and from the Italian of Dante's poem. The emphasis on parallels excludes the large body of critical writings attempting to show influences and precursors of Dante. Parallels were formed on the basis of personal examination and interpretation of both Celtic and Dantean material. Opinions of authors who wrote works seeking to establish sources for the Commedia are included in the Chapter entitled Conclusions, to show that scholars recognize a body of vision literature outside of The Divine Comedy. The hypothesis reached by this investigator, on the subject of sources, is that both Celtic writers and Dante knew Classical antiquity well, to begin with, and were later thoroughly immersed in Christian teaching, resulting in the producing of similar material of an eschatological nature. Egyptian, Chaldean, Persian, Greco and Hebrew "traces" are noted to support the hypothesis.

Among the chief parallels in Imrama legends are the invitation to the Otherworld by a queen; music accompanying the invitation; a Happy Otherworld across water; food to

everyone's taste, flowers, ever-pleasant weather in the Land of Delight; a place where precious stones, often melodic, were found; a disinclination to leave the Otherworld.

Main parallels in Fis legends are angelic guides to the Otherworld; a narrow bridge to be crossed; a dispute between angels and demons over possesion of the soul; angelic protection afforded mortals; souls tormented by rivers of punishment; demons chewing the damned; a stench and thick smoke in Hell; a place of purgation, not eternal, and sometimes not so much painful as devoid of pleasure, negative; punishments suited to the transgressions of individuals; a heaven of radiant light; choirs of angels; saints who advise mortals; gradations in Heaven; a rampart of precious stones around Heaven; a brilliant nebulousness for God; a holy court around God; angelic escort back to earth.

St Patrick's Purgatory offers several parallels to Dante's Purgatorio in its physical likeness, in that it is, in its entrance-way, round, hollow, cavern-shaped, has a long level part, and is possessed of a brilliantly-peaked mountain farther on. Knight Owen who descended into Purgatory walked over a long plain; crossed a narrow bridge; was beset by black demons; escaped the pain of a roaring fire by uttering the name of Christ; remarked the evil smell and the thick smoke coming from Hell; saw sinners lying naked on the ground with nails driven through their flesh; saw sinners enduring storms of hail, rain and filth; observed souls suspended by their ankles; observed souls gripped by monsters while their interior parts were gnawed by serpents,

found that spirits suffered according to their sins. Then Owen saw people winding up a mountain that was overpoweringly radiant at the summit, and that was beyond a gate set with beautifully colored stones, before which was a river, and from which music emanated. Parallels of the details in St. Patrick's Purgatory are found in the Commedia. Owen had been living a sinful life but after viewing the pain of Purgatory he repented and lived virtuously thereafter. This is much like Dante's own life.

Erigena's translation of the Celestial Hierarchy is similar to Paradiso in the following ways: angels are divided into three Triads, seraphim, cherubim, thrones; powers, dominations, virtues; principalities, archangels, angels. They govern the spheres that God has allocated them according to their special capacities. Order is the notable characteristic of Heaven based on the angelic desire to serve God and to make known His will. Grace and light are transmitted from God downward through Heaven, less intense the farther away from God. For example, light on the sphere, Moon, is inconstant, and the will-power of the residents of the sphere is likewise deficient in the strengthening power of God's Grace because the Moon is the sphere which gets least light or grace from God. The soul is drawn upward to God by reason of the intense longing it has to rest in His Love.

Parallels between Richard of St. Victor and Dante exist in the emphasis given the role of contemplation in attaining the Presence of God. Richard describes six steps in contemplation divided among the three powers of the soul,imagination, reason, and intelligence. The steps are "mentis dilatio" or human

effort, "mentis sublevatio" of human effort illuminated by Divine Grace, and "mentis alienatio", the mind given over to mystical union. In the latter state, the soul is able to grasp the mysteries of the Church as in a flash. It remembers nothing of its exaltation afterward. Dante says in Paradiso XXXIII that when he had reached the uppermost point in Heaven a and had gazed upon God, he knew with his understanding all the doctrines of the Church that he had previously accepted through faith alone. He says in Paradiso I that he cannot recall all that happened to him at the climax of his heavenly journey.

One of the most important parallels in the study occurs in the intangible, ideological realm of the spirit. Celtic Otherworld interest is here paralleled by a like burning interest on the part of the Florentine poet and espresses itself in a style similar to his, in such details as descriptions of nature, intensity of expression, character delineation, a touch of humor, an overtone of emotion, a recognition of the role of women in spiritual influence, and above all, a deep religious significance.

BIOGRAPHY

There ia an obvious parallel between the first part of the title of the study and my name. My parents, Conor and Julia (O'Connor) O'Grady came to this country from Ireland, which accounts for my deep, life-long interest in Celtic literature. I began a serious study of the subject in the late Professor Sydney Gunn's courses in Celtic literature at Boston University.

The present investigation is far removed from my vocation as a teacher of elementary grade children in the public schools of Springfield, Massachusetts. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Boston University, 1937, and a Master's degree in Education from the same institution, 1940. I was born in Springfield on January 30, 1907, attended the Sacred Heart grammar and high school there, conducted by the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, and went to the State Teachers College at Westfield for two years.

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